

THE DEVIL IS MAKING CITY

魔王様の街づくり!

～最強のダンジョン
は近代都市～

4

著 月夜涙

絵 ふーみ



The Demon Lord's building a city! - volume 4: The Last of The Four Great Elements

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Prologue: The shadow creeping in on Avalon

"That [Creation] Demon Lord is interesting, isn't he? He's more than what I imagined."

Through one of the quadruplet demons, [Evil] Demon Lord's real collaborator had watched the [War] in almost its entirety.

The other three of the quadruplet demons served under the Demon Lords in [Steel]'s alliance as a means of communication. Despite that though, information had unknowingly and continuously been leaked to [Evil] and this collaborator.

When [Evil]'s crystal broke, the feed was interrupted but the amount of information the collaborator had received had been more than enough.

From the start, this collaborator was a Demon Lord that expected more out of [Creation] than anyone else but even his expectations were surpassed. He knew that Procell had 3 S ranks monsters namely a Celestial Fox, an Elder Dwarf, and an Ancient Elf. He also knew that Procell had a powerful weapon no one had ever seen before.

Moreover, this collaborator had heard from rumors that Procell had another, even more powerful trump card that was able to repel even the Byakko that was a long-serving warrior feared by many Demon Lords in the battlefield.

Obviously, this power was strange for a just recently born Demon Lord to have. If left as he was, the collaborator believed without any doubt that Procell would soon reign supreme as the strongest Demon Lord.

In light of this, the collaborator raised his guard. He was the only one to do so though. All the other Demon Lords knew through their connections about the fact that Procell faced three Demon Lords that were lent that strong A rank

monsters—the Orihalcum Gargoyle, the Arch Demon, and the Byakko—in this war and still won in the end.

Their information wasn't as detailed as the collaborator's but this still proved how the span of a Demon Lord's connections was extremely important. The more influential a Demon Lord was, the wider the network he had.

"Whether I crush him or make use of him, I can't dilly-dally. After all, that guy also looks like he's serious."

The owner of the Byakko came to the collaborator's mind.

He was a prudent and yet daring individual that was very shrewd and popular even among Demon Lords. For that Demon Lord to be so interested in [Creation] Demon Lord Procell, the collaborator knew he could not waste any moment.

Thus, he thought up of a countless number of strategies. These strategies were made not just to go up against [Creation] Demon Lord but also to thwart other Demon Lords aiming for [Creation].

"First, some harassment. It will also be as a kind of farewell gift to [Evil] who helped me."

He thought of [Evil] as nothing but a disposable pawn and yet still murmured such a shameless thing. And thus, he began the harassment of young, talented individuals.



Procell's point of view

"It sure is great that the medals I can make have increased but it's rather hard

to use."

I was alone in my room in Avalon as I grumbled.

By breaking another Demon Lord's crystal, one would be able to make that defeated Demon Lord's original medal. That was extremely wonderful and yet...

"It doesn't mean that the number of original medals I can make in a month has increased, only that the kinds of medals I can make have increased."

Don't get me wrong, I'm really happy I got them since my [Creation] could only be used in Synthesis with at least one other original medal. Additionally, until now, I didn't have any way for me to obtain original medals—aside from [Creation]—on my own. So, the fact that I was now able to use [Creation] in Synthesis and reliably make a monster once every two months was a huge step forward for me.

That said...

"I still have [Time] and [Water]. I want to use those first. So it's fine if I only make [Creation] for a while. The new medals are all B rank medals so there's not much charm in making those for the time being."

I had two A rank medals at the moment but had completely ran out of [Creation]. Also, the last time I had made a [Creation] medal was in the middle of the [War] I had just won so the next one wouldn't be until after a month. For the moment, these medals would be like pearls thrown before swine, treasures given to someone that could not make use of them.

I then slowly stretched my body. Today, I was not accompanied by Kuina and the others who usually did so. I asked to be alone since I wanted to refine some

future policies while slogging through my city administration office work.

For now until I officially become independent, which was 9 months from now, I was safe from wars with old Demon Lords. As for fellow new Demon Lords, since I had won over three Demon Lords in a single war, another challenge was unlikely and that gave me a peace of mind.

What I should be thinking from now was what to do when I finally become independent. To not be crushed by the old Demon Lords, I should increase my fighting force as well as make my city flourish. Also, if possible, I would like to have an alliance with strong Demon Lords.

The previous war made me bitterly recognize the importance of an alliance. However, if I were to be in an alliance, I wouldn't be let to be the only one to benefit from it, the others would demand they too must profit.

“.....this is making my head hurt. I should go take a break for now.”

When I noticed it, the sun had already set; quite the right time to have dinner.

Even though a Demon Lord—who fed on human emotions—didn't have to eat meals, I found the act of eating meals enjoyable as a form of amusement.

Thus, I left my room and headed toward the tavern within the city.



There were currently two taverns in Avalon. The first one was a store whose only saving grace was its cheapness. It was popular among adventurers and farmers and was therefore always crowded. The other one offered expensive but good food and alcohol. The ambiance there was also calming.

I headed for the latter store.

It gained high points from me not only for the chefs' skills but also for actively

offering food that made use of ingredients that was procured from Avalon such as our wheats and the potatoes. Furthermore, by making use of my influence as the head of the city, I was able to enjoy their line-up of choice alcohol acquired from various places.

As such, I visited this store quite often.

Upon entering the store, I noticed that the tables were fairly occupied. A few were adventurers but most of the customers were those affiliated with shops that did business within the city.

“Procell-sama, welcome. Thank you for choosing to dine with us.”

The shopkeeper, a dandy middle-aged person, courteously greeted me so.

“The food is delicious here after all. Give me strong alcohol. I’ll leave the choice of food on you.”

“Certainly.”

As per usual, I left the choice of food on the shopkeeper’s recommendation and only stated the kind of alcohol I wanted.

This way, I could eat the most delicious food they could make from that day’s highest quality ingredients. The quality of ingredients procured from other villages and cities tended to vary so what the most delicious cuisine today might not be so tomorrow.

When the shopkeeper gave instructions to the kitchen, fragrant aroma soon filled the air.

What came out of the kitchen was the alcohol along with three dishes.

The first one was a potato gratin. It was an oven-baked dish that featured thinly-sliced potatoes that were harvested from Avalon, ample amounts of cheese and tomatoes, and some minced meat. As a side note, dairy farms had begun appearing in the city; after the fresh milk first appeared on the market, the dairy products in the city all at once became better.

The second dish was a white stew made with duck meat. It was a superb cuisine made from meticulously boiling ducks over long periods of time. The ducks were gotten by this city's hunters from the forest, by the way.

The last one was a side salad that made skillful use of wild greens. It looked fresh and appetizing.

As for the strong alcohol, it was amber colored like a whiskey. Its smoky scent was irresistible.

“For today as well, your meals seem delicious.”

“Yes, we were able to get our hands on some incredibly good ingredients today. It even made the chef scream.”

And so, I began to eat.

For the potato gratin, the syrupy cheese exquisitely suited the sourness of the tomatoes. The juicy minced meat contrasted well with the flaky potatoes. It was outstanding.

The white stew made with duck meat was out of this world. There were a sufficient amount of duck bones in the stock so its flavor had properly integrated into it. The more I chew on the duck meat, the more the flavor comes out from it.

And when I poured and drank the strong alcohol, it was just the best.

I felt really glad that I was able to occasionally eat these kind of food. Had I not made a city and only holed myself up within a proper dungeon, I wouldn't be able to enjoy these things.

Humans had weak strength and hearts but they were beings with many useful points about them.

I decided to have some of the food wrapped and give them to the girls. *They have to taste this*, I thought.

As I was thinking of such, I heard the voices of people I knew coming from a table further in.

“Please cheer up, Wight-sama!”

One voice belonged to a Dwarf Smith. To be more specific it was the Dwarf Smith that was Rorono’s top apprentice as well as the one that served as the adjutant for the defensive forces in the last [War].

She was a fairly pretty girl with brown skin and silver hair.

“M’lady, I’m sorry you have to see me in such a miserable state but without drinking, I won’t be able to go on.”

There was one other voice I heard and it belonged to Wight who was previously a skeletal monster but was now a Siegwurm, a black dragon of death, due to [Rebirth].

He vigorously drank from his glass. The contents of his glass was similar to mine: fairly strong alcohol.

By the way, the shopkeeper wasn’t surprised even if there was a dragonewt here since this city was publicly announced to be a city for demi-humans that were being persecuted elsewhere. Various races coexisted here so a dragonewt wasn’t so surprising.

“I’ll fill you another glass.”

“Thanks, m’lady.”

At a frightening speed, Wight emptied his drink. If he was a human, he probably would have collapsed a long time ago.

He was distracted enough to not have noticed me when I entered this tavern. He was supposed to be making preparations for his wedding and should have been at the peak of happiness... *did something happen?*

“Drink until you drop and you’ll forget your worries. I will look after you so don’t worry.”

“.....I’ll take you up on your offer, then. For your usually proud-looking superior to act so miserably, are you disillusioned by me, m’lady?”

“Not in the slightest! If anything, knowing that Wight-san has this weak side to him has made me like... Ahem, made me know you better.”

“Fufu, m’lady is so very kind. Then, for today only, please accompany me in my complaining and drinking.”

“Yes, ok! And I don’t mind even if it’s every day!”

It seemed something painful did happen to Wight and the Dwarf Smith was there to console him. I wanted to ask him directly what the problem was but that seemed a bit too...

As I was thinking so, he slammed his glass against the table.

“A reptilian is physiologically too much, she says. How can Ske-san say that when I love her so much!?”

Pfft.

Upon knowing of the reason why he was so frustrated, I unintentionally gagged.

It would seem that because he became a dragonewt through [Rebirth], Ske-san broke up with him. *I might have caused him his troubles*, I thought, *I'll send over some superb alcohol to him next time.*

“That’s horrible, isn’t it?”

“Yes, it is. But then again, I understand where Ske-san is coming from. The barriers between races are wide. It might be wrong of me to condemn her so. As expected, being together with someone of the same race is the best.”

“Not at all!!”

The Dwarf Smith stood and shouted so, attracting the attention of their surroundings. When she realized this, her face reddened and she apologized before sitting down again.

“What’s most important isn’t the race but one’s attraction to another. Even if the other person is of another race, someone beautiful on the inside will always be the best for me. Whether he be just bones or a dragonewt, as long as he’s lovely to me, I want to be with him!”

Upon hearing her words, Wight smiled gently.

“You are such a lovely girl, aren’t you? I hope someone as lovely as you are appears soon.”

“.....I feel complicated about that but I’m happy to be called lovely by you, Wight-san.”

The Dwarf Smith then enthusiastically poured alcohol onto his glass.

Nevertheless, Wight was amazing in a way.

"That guy, just how dense can he be to not notice the Dwarf Smith's affection."

Oh well, it must be because he's heartbroken that his vision has become narrow. They themselves look content so I'll leave it be.

I wasn't an uncouth boss who would meddle in his subordinates' romance.

And so, I gave the two a last look, paid my bill, and then left the tavern.



I returned to my house and resumed my work.

After a while, the letters arrived.

Recently the number of cities and villages I've been in contact with had increased and so too did the number of letters.

Among those letters was one letter that was within a very fine envelope.

I peered inside it and grinned.

"So it has come."

It was a letter from the neighboring city's feudal lord.

The contents of the letter was just as one could imagine.

Basically, this city was located outside of any national border and instead was within the dominion of monsters. The city was therefore not under the rule of any country.

However, such a reason didn't matter to a country or its leaders. If there was a tasty fruit dangling before them, they would want that fruit. That was all the

reason they needed and nothing more.

“Now then, how shall I respond?”

I began to consider which countermeasures that I had thought up from the start I should use. I wanted it to go as peaceful as possible but if the other party wasn't so inclined, it would rain blood.

If they wanted me to pay some tax, I would gladly do so. However, should they covet the city itself, then...

I was a peace-lover but by no means was I a conscientious objector.

I at least understood that peace was the ultimate luxury and was paid for in blood.

Chapter 1: The [Mine] and Rorono

I confirmed the contents of the letter that came from a neighboring city's feudal lord.

The phrasing was excessively overbearing but the contents written was easy enough to follow.

To summarize:

It must have been dismal to live in a savage land where the influence of the empire did not reach. However, rejoice and despair no more for His Majesty is benevolent; if you display for us your sincerity, His Majesty has permitted you to be under the empire's protection. In the interim, soldiers whose task is to examine the real state of things will be dispatched three days later and you are therefore expected to prepare a proper welcome for them.

"It's such a condescending way to write."

The letter wasn't wrong.

Avalon was indeed a city built in a land under the dominion of monsters and was therefore not under the rule of any country and were under the constant threat of attacks from monsters. Put in another way, we didn't have a patron supporting us. It wouldn't have been surprising to be attacked by whichever country.

That was where the "protection" came in. It might not have sounded so bad but broken down and simplified, it would.

"Accepting this will mean soldiers will be permanently stationed here and we will be essentially under the empire's rule. We will be made to follow their

policies. In exchange for their “protection”, we will be expected to hand over money and resources.”

Generally, we would have to pay a tax that the empire one-sidedly determined and also present the greater part of our produce.

The impact to smaller businesses would be significant in a negative way. Aside from imposing separate taxes on the smaller businesses, this proposal will make us lose even the ability to freely grant these businesses the right to conduct their businesses.

Probably, even the apples and the dwarven-made weapons would be demanded of us as additional offerings.

Additionally, we would be the ones to shoulder the expenses of the soldiers that would be permanently stationed here. Those soldiers’ behavior as well would negatively affect the other citizens.

“Well, this much is tolerable though.”

If we could peacefully conclude things with just this much, I thought that I wouldn’t mind silently abiding.

If I turned it down, we were liable to face an unknown number of beings called heroes. Some of these heroes might be from a neighboring country, sent to help aid the empire. Aside from the threat of the heroes, I would also like to avoid of the risk of being attacked by other Demon Lords just when we got exhausted from our fight with the humans.

Since we could just rebel after Avalon’s operation had stabilized and I had gained enough fighting force, pretending to have an allegiance for the empire wasn’t so bad.

Of course, I still intended to negotiate better terms for us but if during the whole affair, a line that I would determine beforehand was crossed, not even

that temporary allegiance would happen and a show of force could not be helped.

Maybe we would even end up as the ones ruling over the neighboring city.

I decided that for the time being though, I should consult with Wight; that guy's an all-around guy blessed even with a political sense.

...no, it's better to do that tomorrow; tonight's probably not a good time for him, I thought as I put away the letter.



The next morning came and I awoke in my bed.

I felt something soft and warm in my left arm. I discovered it was Kuina hugging my left arm tightly. Considering she was dressed with her favorite lovely pajamas while also showing a defenseless sleeping face, she looked completely like an angel.

I unconsciously brushed her face. Doing so, still sleeping, her facial reaction slackened.

By just seeing her like that, my will to endure and slog through the day was renewed.

"Master, Kuina, wake up. We have plans to go to the mines this morning."

Rorono then entered my room.

"Thanks for coming to wake us, Rorono."

"Mhm. Breakfast is already prepared."

Rorono glanced with slight envy at Kuina who was still hugging my left arm.

Until recently, we all slept together in one bed but due to the several occasions of somebody being kicked out of the bed by Kuina's tossing and turning as she slept, a shifting system was now in place to determine who would get to sleep beside me. The previous night was Kuina's turn, the next night would be Aura's and the night after that would be Rorono's. *I have to spoil Rorono as much as she wants on her turn.*

Sleeping together with everyone all at once was great but sleeping with a different one each night was better. This way, I was able confirm each one's individual and distinct charms.

"Thank you as always, Rorono."

"Mhm. I am a dwarf so as long as it's making something, whether food, weapons, or clothes, I'm fond of it."

According to her, she was increasing her repertoire of cuisines that she could make through the cooking book I made with [Creation].

The taste was not yet up to par with a pro but my daughter's home cooking would always bring extreme happiness to me.

"Then, let's go. Though before that, we have to wake Kuina first, huh."

And so, I poked Kuina's squishy cheek. It was smooth, moderately elastic, and seemingly addictive.

After a while of poking her cheek, Kuina opened her eyes.

"Oto-san, good morning. Hmm, Oto-san's scent."

Kuina let go of my left arm but only to jump onto my chest where she pressed her cheek.

"You're such a spoiled child, aren't you? It can't be helped then."

I did not have the heart to tear Kuina away so I stood up with her still clinging onto me and moved to the kitchen where Aura was waiting for us.



After we finished our breakfast, I headed toward the [Mine] area with Rorono.

Kuina said she'll visit the store tended by the Mythological Foxes while Aura said she was going to take care of a new fruit.

The [Mine] area was a secret so we went there while being mindful not to be seen by the public. I greeted the golems guarding the border of the dungeon rooms and then went inside.

An aspect of the Mine was that it was very wide. On the frontside were the hard minerals while at the back were the pools of lava.

"How is it? Has something changed since last we've been here?"

"Mhm. A considerably large scale crustal movement did occur. I wouldn't know the exact figures unless I examine pretty deep down with my sonar but it looks like we can expect good results. This [Mine] has certainly grown."

"I did level up a lot and have gotten stronger so yeah. Moreover, I have completed my [Monsters of the Covenant]. Even now, I can feel your power flowing into me."

We usually set time and level up in the [Crimson Cavern]. However, since the monsters from [Crimson Cavern] were now in danger of extinction, we had chosen to then hunt only the ones that came out of the [Maelstroms].

Due to that, the amount of experience points that I gained in a day was limited.

However, thanks to the many high-ranking and high-leveled monsters we fought in the previous [War], I had leveled up a lot.

In addition, the completion of my [Monsters of the Covenant] was also a huge boost. A Demon Lord's strength grew in proportion to his [Monsters of the Covenant]'s strength after all.

Finally, I thought, I can call myself a fully-fledged Demon Lord.

"I'm happy that master became stronger. Not only for the power up of the [Mine] but also for your safety.I'll begin examining the ground, then. [Mineral Resonance]"

Rorono placed her hands on the ground and used earth magic.

By sending magic power of a special wavelength into the ground, she was able to examine whichever mineral was there. It was such a magic.

And using this magic, she could pinpoint the best mining points and what could be dug from it.

The magic's effective range was 500 meters radius which of course included the underground. Meanwhile, a [Mine]'s greatest size was 2Km by 2Km. So to inspect the [Mine] in its entirety, we would have to use this magic multiple times at different locations.

"How is it, Rorono?"

"Mithril and gold can be gotten from this spot. There aren't any orihalcum but

the mithril deposits here has risen so this is good news.”

“Okay, onto the next spot, then. If the increase of mithril in the ground is any indication, we’re bound to find orihalcum soon.”

Rorono nodded to my statement in her usual expressionless face. Ever so slightly though, the corners of her mouth were raised. She must have been excited to get her hands on good materials; good raw materials were indispensable to blacksmiths after all.

Like that, we continued to inspect different spots. And then...

“Father, here. Orihalcum can be mined here! With this, the things that we can make will increase!”

She excitedly informed me so.

I was about to give up when we finally found some orihalcum at the last spot.

We still couldn’t mine any adamantite but adamantite was a metal used purely for their hardness whereas orihalcum was used for its high affinity with magic and was thus more important to us.

“That’s great news, Rorono”

“Mhm. It is indispensable for my [Mechanical Warmaiden] where mithril just won’t be enough. With orihalcum, I can repair it when it’s broken and even do some improvements on it. Come golems and focus digging at this spot!”

She ordered so and the golems under her command were summoned. They then immediately began to dig. When I looked closely, the shape of their hands was suited for mining.

After she became my [Monster of the Covenant], she became able to produce modified golems. In addition to the before-mentioned mining golems, she could

also make transportation-focused golems that walked on four legs as well as kamikaze golems for suicide bombings, to name a few.

The span of our strategies had expanded along with the increase in variation of the golems. The more types of golems she could make, the more tricks we could pull. In line with that, we were continuously and repeatedly researching and experimenting on highly efficient golems.

“It seems like the golems have already dug out some orihalcum.”

When Rorono put the silver-colored orihalcum into her hand directed magic power into it, it began to change form through her special ability, the [Platinum Alchemist].

The liquefied orihalcum changed its shape according to Rorono’s desire. The unwanted impurities was then made to leak out.

Next, while she applied pressure through other kinds of earth magic, she enchanted it by adding in the magic seals into it.

Halfway through the manufacturing process, she took out mithril and silver from her pocket, liquefied it, and added it to the orihalcum. By turning into an orihalcum alloy, its performance increased.

If it was an ordinary blacksmith, the process would probably take them a few months whereas she finished it in just a few minutes with her magic.

As a finishing touch, the part of the handle was wrapped by the leather from a demonic beast. And so, two knives made of orihalcum alloy were created. They were small, easy to use, and looked good. Their blade was terribly thin.

The sheaths were premade ones from her pocket.

“Master, I have made these to commemorate the first time we were able to mine orihalcum. They’re thin and light but also very sharp. They’re made of an orihalcum alloy so despite their thinness, I can guarantee they are durable. I hope you will carry one with you.”

I accepted a knife from her.

When I picked it up, I was so surprised. It was as light as a feather. When I pulled it from its sheath, its blade reflected off the light so brightly. It was a devilish blade; just by looking at it, it felt as though my soul was being sucked in.

“I will. If it’s this, it should be easy to carry around. It’s a good knife.”

“Mhm. I’m glad you’re pleased with it.”

When I stored away my knife into my inner pocket, she did the same with hers.

Rorono acting as though we were mirroring each other was so cute.

“By the way, Rorono, have you ever heard of a metal better than orihalcum?”

“No. Is there such a thing?”

“I’ve come to recently think that there might be. The metals that could be gotten from a [Mine] were proportional to a Demon Lord’s strength and the currently highest ranking metal is orihalcum. I most likely am the only Demon Lord that can make S rank monsters so the power I can get from my [Monsters of the Covenant] should be far greater than what any Demon Lord can get from theirs. By the time the three of you have grown to your fullest, I would be stronger than any current Demon Lord. If that’s so, it wouldn’t be so weird for us to be able to mine a metal that no one else has seen before, right?”

I thought that such a thing wasn't really outside the realm of possibilities. As long as it was my lovely daughters, I had the expectation that they would bring me to heights no one has been before.

"It certainly is likely. It'll be great if it does happen. A weapon made from a metal higher ranking than orihalcum... I want to make that someday with my own hands, the ultimate weapon."

She was in trance as she thought of that metal.

I then lightly brushed her head. Realizing she drifted off in her musings, her face grew red.

"We've done what we came for so shall we head back?"

"Mhm. Master, I will do my best for us to get the highest ranking metal ever. I will make stronger and easier to use weapons for Kuina and Aura so that they can become stronger and be closer to that metal."

Since she was saying it like that, I had no doubt in my heart that she would make it come true.

"Yeah, I expect much from you, Rorono. I know you can do it."

"Mhm."

While she tried to hide her face that reddened, I held her hand and we walked to the outside. By becoming able to obtain a steady supply of orihalcum, my monsters would grow even stronger.

Also, I had decided that if Rorono had the time to spare, I would request of her a weapon of my own.

After all, it was a matter of honor for a Demon Lord^{Father} to be able to could protect his children. And for that, I needed a powerful weapon.

Note: I have changed [Silver Alchemist] to [Platinum Alchemist]. Also, I might change the m'lady Wight uses for Dwarf Smith to Miss. Wight uses レディ/Lady but it seems kind of cringy, I guess, even after considering it's Wight.

Chapter 2: The Byakko and the New Fruit

The result of my and Rorono's trip to the [Mine] was that we found out that the Mithril deposits there had increased and also that orihalcum could now be mined.

In exchange for those though, the amount of silver had declined but that was probably inconsequential.

Upon our return, Rorono said she was going to shut herself in her workshop and begin on making new weapon designs.

According to her, because our stock of orihalcum before was limited, she had to compromise the performance of the weapons she had made for Kuina and Aura. It seemed she also had to consider about the spare parts for when the weapons break down.

None of that mattered now though; the only consideration she had to keep in mind now was their performance.

Anyway, I had other work to take care of today. For the next one, I was walking out of our residence together with Aura the Ancient Elf.

"Well then, master, shall we go?"

"Yeah, Aura."

The day after tomorrow, the soldiers from the next city was going to be dispatched. That being said, that didn't mean the operation of the city had to stop.

On the surface, we were business as usual. Beneath the surface though, we were advancing our various preparations.

And so, we were on the way to see the new fruit Aura had grown.

That fruit was similar to the apples in the way that it didn't exist in this world.

"Fufu, master's sleeping face was so cute."

"Well, I can't see myself while sleeping so I really wouldn't know."

The night before last night was Aura's turn to sleep beside me. Just like how she was the only who didn't who cling to me while sleeping, she was also the only one among them to wake up before me, taking then the opportunity to look at my face.

Sleeping beside her sure was enjoyable but unlike the others, I could feel some kind of distance.

"This has been in my mind for a while now but you're the only one that doesn't refer to me as father; is there some kind of reason?"

Kuina always did so while Rorono calls me father only on special occasions like when she's excited about something. However, Aura only ever called me master.

"Do you want me to?"

"No, not really."

Aura then placed a finger to her lips and smiled. It was strangely so charming.

"I also like master but my like is different from the others. Anything beyond

this is secret."

She said so as though that was the end of that conversation and then hurried onto our destination. Just like with Rorono, Aura and I held hands as we walked but the way we did so was a little bit different: with the palm of our hands facing outward.

"Alright, I won't ask any further. Let's go then."



Like that, we arrived at the orchards. The High Elves were busily moving about and tending to the apple trees.

There were many human farmers too though they tended to their own crops and not the apple trees.

The apples were Avalon's precious specialty product. Since the apple trees were showered daily by the [Water of Life] made by Aura the Ancient Elf and were also raised by the blessings of the High Elves, the fruits could stay fresh for several months. Additionally, the apples could also satisfy one's hunger, thus making them popular among adventurers headed to dungeons. Other effects included its ability to relieve fatigue, strengthen one's recuperative abilities, and help in the treatment of curses.

The regular apples' effects weren't as overwhelming as those from the First Tree but they were still on par with low-grade magic potions. Rumors of the apples and their effects had spread like wildfire and they became popular items. So popular in fact that they vanished from stores the moment that they appeared.

And so, many customers from other cities came to Avalon to buy apples. They stayed the night at our inns and thus became a lifeline for Avalon.

"As usual, it's a splendid sight. They're so full of life."

"Naturally. They are after all grown with love by me, an Ancient Elf, and several High Elves."

Ancient Elf aside, High Elves by themselves were superior beings. There probably wasn't any orchard as plentiful as ours.

"Seeing all these splendid apple trees like this made me want to see the First Tree again after a while."

"Okay, let's now go see the new fruit ahead, then. I'm sure that child will be glad to see master too."

"Really?"

"Really."

Aura informed me so and we moved to the inner part of the orchard.

Upon doing so, I noticed that the trees surround us became twice as large.

The surrounding atmosphere changed and I felt a cool but powerful aura.

And then, I saw a lot of fruits that looked like they shined, only to realize that they literally, really did shine a golden glow.

"Aura, what's going on? I'm sure pretty sure fruits didn't glow like that."

"I believe it's an effect of me becoming a [Monster of the Covenant]. I have been giving the First Tree the special [Water of Life]—which I made by pouring half of my entire magic power—almost daily. So to cope with all that power, it made changed itself and became a very splendid tree. However, when I became a [Monster of the Covenant], the effects of my [Personification of the Planet] became stronger too, so the fruits this little one bears is now comparable to the fruits of the heavens."

Aura explained so and then stuck out her tongue playfully.

I on the meantime was at a loss for words.

Just by looking at it, I could feel the terrifying power emanating from within.

To begin with, just the fact that it received half of an S rank Ancient Elf's entire magic power was ridiculous. But for it to receive an even more potent nourishment, well, that was beyond comprehension.

"May I eat one?"

"Yes, please do."

I drew near the First Tree. Upon doing so, a large, white silhouette appeared from the tree and bared its fangs.

"Ah! Kohaku-san, wait!"

Aura shouted so and Byakko halted his advanced with a twitch.

"Now that I look closely, It's you, [Creation] Demon Lord. I thought you were another apple thief. Sorry."

Upon saying so, Byakko lied down and yawned. He then took out a golden apple from his magnificent fur and munched on it. It was an immensely surreal scene.

"What the heck's going on?"

I asked Aura.

"Instead of a watchdog guarding the apple trees, we have a watchtiger! You have entrusted me with Kohaku-san's recovery, right? So after I had purified the miasma's curse, I brought him here. Kohaku-san's wounds and curse have been cured but Wight-san's miasma attack has seeped deep into his body and has considerably contaminated his soul. So I've determined that prolonged treatment through exposure to the life energies that became holy around the First tree and through the consumption of the apples was necessary."

"Just one blow injured even a monster as strong as Byakko that much?"

I began to fully realize just how strong the black dragon of death Siegwurm was.

"Yes. Honestly, if it weren't for the First Tree's apples, there was nothing that could have been done to help Kohaku-san. Even I couldn't purify him completely. So the only option for now is for him to slowly recover."

I gulped down. The new golden apple was already proving to be extremely reliable.

That was great and all but...

"What do you mean watchtiger?"

"Exactly that. Look, it's written on that sign over there. It says *whoever is found stealing an apple will be eaten alive by a tiger*. Originally, many humans had come to steal the apples, right? After the apples started glowing like gold, even more came. Plus, first-class adventurers who cooperated with everybody and fought to the death also appeared. I and the High Elves could handle them individually but the golems on the other hand were too slow so apples were stolen from them. But then, after Byakko came, we were all able to relax!"

"Wha—"

I was momentarily stunned.

Certainly, the apples by themselves were worth risking one's life, what more were the stronger gold apples.

However...

"You shouldn't have made Byakko the sentinel. He still belongs to the strongest class of monsters. Moreover, he's our great senior."

The Byakko was a long-serving warrior and deserved a certain level of respect.

Upon hearing me, Aura grew smaller.

In response, Byakko spoke.

"I don't mind. I have to stay in this place overflowing with holy life energy and eat these fruits to recover anyway. This is the least I can do to thank these girls who raised these very valuable recovery items."

He said so and joyfully laughed, *kakaka!*

"Are you sure?"

"Yeah. This place is quite comfortable and the apples are more delicious than anything so I don't really mind."

"Alright, then, until you've fully recovered, please stay here."

"You don't have to request it; be more overbearing. You are my true master, after all."

In exchange for pledging his allegiance to me, he had one condition: to not be asked about his master before [Steel].

Even though it was already his former master, making him divulge his former master's secrets went against his sense of loyalty. If I were to forego his pride, I better be ready for the consequences.

I accepted that condition, thinking if I were to gain the loyalty of man like him, that condition was tolerable.

"Aura, inform me beforehand of things like this. Byakko didn't mind but there may be instances where the other party would be offended."

"Forgive me, master."

"Don't get angry at her, now. I'm the one that suggested it. She even refused at first but I insisted. It pains me to see my benefactor being blamed for my imprudence. She did well; she's a good monster."

At that, I smiled.

"Okay. Aura, I'm sorry I had it wrong. It seems you accomplished your role fully."

"I am not worthy of such praise."

Aura and I looked at each other's eyes and smiled.

It was great that she did not harbor ill will toward me.

Byakko watched us be like that and spoke.

"To further repay the girl that helped me so much, let me offer an advice to you. It's about Wight who has been reborn. Do not be overconfident; he is not the strongest monster ever. If you make a mistake on the way you use him, he

will pointlessly die. If he and I were to fight again one on one and I have completely recovered, I can surely win.”

“Really? Even against his speed, strength, and powerful special abilities? He doesn’t seem to have any weaknesses.”

Byakko laughed, *kakaka*, before he continued on.

“That great man has often visited me to wish me better health but during those times, I noticed something. It’s that he uses considerably large amounts of power just to hold [Berserk] down. While he’s doing that, his overall strength is dipping down to maybe a rank lower. His special ability would also be completely unusable in that state. Like that, I as well as that girl there can defeat him.”

“And if he releases [Berserk]?”

“That’s fine too. There’s a time limit on how long he can release [Berserk] before being unable to turn back. That time limit isn’t particularly long but during it, he becomes nothing but a mindless brute devoid of intelligence and reason. If one is able to parry and avoid his onslaught, dealing with him is easy. And when the time limit for [Berserk] comes, he would be exhausted and easy to defeat. I and that girl can deploy this tactic. Perhaps other top-tier A rank monsters too. If faced with a dilemma, with his personality, he might choose to rather continue using [Berserk] and become unable to turn back all so that he can fulfill his role.”

What Byakko said was quite right.

That being said, even if his strength falls a rank lower, he would still be comparable to an S rank monster. I doubted that there were going to be many enemies that could keep up with him and the ones that could do so when he’s in [Berserk] mode would be even fewer.

"I'll keep it in mind. I'll stop relying on him too much. I'll make his primary role be as a tactician. But if the enemy chooses to push with just numbers, that might be a good time for [Berserk] to shine."

"I approve. Losing such an honorable man would be a big blow so do take care."

As soon as he finished talking, he circled around, lied down and began to sleep.

Nevertheless, as expected from a long-serving warrior; he's very reliable. He was a great addition to our forces not only for his fighting prowess, but also for making up for our lack of experience.

I planned to assign him to more important tasks after he has fully recovered from his injuries. In place of the *watchtiger*, I intended to post the new golems Rorono currently had under development. If those were lightweight, high-speed type golems, they wouldn't fall behind even against first-class adventurers.

"By the way, what do you do with the apple thieves?"

"Kill them and bury their corpses. When Wight comes to check on me, he uses his Enhanced Resurrection and turns them into undead. The high leveled adventurers become undead with high intelligence which always pleases Wight."

...It seems that these two really got along.

Also, even without my knowledge, it seems my fighting force has been growing little by little.



And so, it was finally time for our real task for today.

Aura guided me and we arrived at a location with many trees that had

fascinating fruits.

And yet those fruits were not apples but peaches.

Prior to these ones, peaches too were gone from this world. However, there existed overly similar fruits called Pinal (ピナル). It seems Pinals were grown in an isolated village founded by the elves that were former monsters of a Demon Lord.

“Is this the new fruit?”

“Yes! And they’ve ripened a little bit more now.”

“.....won’t these trees become like the First Tree?”

“That tree’s special. It’s the very first tree to grow in this city so it became spoiled like that. As expected, I can spoil only one tree like that but even so, I’ve got a lot of love to give to the others.”

I then plucked out a peach.

They had ripened well. A sweet smell also drifted from it.

The apples’ refreshing aroma was good but the peaches’ strong, concentrated aroma was superb too.

I took out the knife I got from Rorono, peeled the fruit, and sliced it in half, and gave the other half to Aura.

She smiled as she received it.

“I feel bad for Kuina and Rorono but let’s taste this before them.”

“Okay, master!”

We bit into the peaches.

In my mouth, fruit juices overflowed. My brain seemed like it would melt with the peach's soft texture and sweet juices.

"So delicious!"

"Yeah. It's really sweet and delicious."

Just like with the apple, this would probably become one of our special products.

Originally, every single legend I knew that involved peaches presented them to give longer life. Perhaps these peaches somehow exhibited similar effects.

"You did great, Aura. Not surprisingly, eating just apples would make one grow tired of it. But with these, more humans would flock to Avalon."

"I hope that happens."

"Yeah, right? But it seems I can never have too much DP. When I have enough, I want to add another floor, increase the B rank monsters I have, and other various interesting things."

Afterwards, we plucked some peaches to give Kuina and Rorono as our souvenirs and then headed home.

This new specialty product would surely play a big role.

I then decided that I would meet with Wight the following day.

I wanted to get an understanding of my new undead fighting forces like the former apple thieves. Also, as his superior, I would like to comfort my broken-hearted subordinate.

Most of all, I needed to meet with Wight to get advice on our measures against the humans.

Chapter 3: The Black Dragon of Death's abilities

For this day, I headed to the underground bread factory to meet with Wight and determine how we were going to respond to the next day's investigation by the humans.

I had already figured most of the plan out but I still wanted to hear Wight's opinion.

I had only indirectly heard it through a Dwarf Smith but it seemed like Wight had already recovered from his heartbreak.

According to Rorono, that Dwarf Smith was in a strangely good mood lately. When I asked Rorono for a possible reason why, she grew embarrassed and dodged the question.

"Can it be that Wight has fallen for her?"

I uttered to myself, thinking it was probable.

After all, that Dwarf Smith was not only a capable and devoted subordinate but a brown-skinned, white-haired beautiful girl as well. She had grown up more than Kuina and the others and appeared to be a woman in her late teens too. She was a great candidate for a love interest.

A brokenhearted man consoled by such a girl would easily fall in love with her, I thought.

Appointing her to be Wight's aide was partly an experiment but it might not be so bad to officially make her so.

As I thought of such things, I soon arrived at my destination.

In the bread factory, the Skeletons were busily moving about. However, mixed among the Skeletons were humans, perfectly ordinary humans..... or so I first thought but they were most likely the killed adventurers-turned-apple-thieves brought back via Enhanced Resurrection.

All the tasks—be it kneading the dough, molding it, or baking it—were perfectly divided among the workers in the assembly line. Under Wight's command, productivity was at its highest.

Every single day, hundreds of people visit Avalon and buy bread. Half of all the bread they bought were from us so to meet such a demand, large amounts of bread needed to be baked in this factory.

By the way, the bread baked here was just simple, hard bread. We could make more kinds but I decided to leave that to the humans. For the moment, we and the human-controlled bakeries were able to exist separately since the ones that wanted to eat just to fill their stomachs bought from us while the ones that wanted to eat delicious food bought from them.

“Oh, it’s you, my lord. Thank you for gracing us with your presence.”

Wight headed toward me in a quick pace.

He was middle-aged butler with grizzled hair, hard horns, bat-like dragon wings, and a burly tail.

“Wight, you seem in an oddly good mood today.”

“You’re just imagining it, my lord.”

So he said but it was obvious that he was indeed in a good mood. It was as

though his piss-drunk, brokenhearted self from before was a lie.

“.....My lord, there is something I must apologize for.”

“It’s unusual of you to make a mistake.”

“It’s not a mistake per se. It’s about the request I asked of you before, about being the one to officiate in my wedding; there’s no more need for you to grant that.”

Wight’s face distorted and became apologetic.

He was all bones up until recently so I was unable to read his facial expressions, unlike now that he became a dragonewt.

“And why is that?”

I asked him so. Since he wasn’t aware that I overheard them that night, it was then logical for me to have no knowledge of Ske-san’s “*Reptilians are physiologically too much*” event.

“Sadly, Ske-san broke it off.”

He didn’t utter a single word of complaint against me even though I was the one at fault for turning him into a dragonewt via [Rebirth].

“Is that so? That’s too bad. Shall I assign Ske-san elsewhere? I imagine working together to be awkward.”

“There’s no need for that. Even though we cancelled our engagement, we still get along as friends. There’s no particular ill will between us.”

“Okay, if you say so.”

Wight and I both smiled.

Afterwards, I looked at him again. It wasn't because I doubted what he said, it was to confirm once more his abilities.

To look at a high ranking monster's status, one would need to have the appropriate level but if the said monster was their own, it was a different story; one should be able to check that monsters' abilities down to the smallest detail regardless of level.

First, I recalled Wight's original stats.

Race: Wight

B Rank

Name: Unnamed

Level: 56

Physical Strength: D

Endurance: D

Agility: C

Magic: B

Luck: E

Special: B+

Skills:

Commander of Wraiths

Average Undead Creation

Wraith Invigoration

Undead

His stats before he was reborn were not very high. In fact, they were even below average for his race rank. However, that was compensated by his excellent special abilities.

Race: Black Dragon of Death Siegwurm

S rank

Name: Unnamed

Level: 56

Physical Strength: S

Endurance: S

Agility: A

Magic: S

Luck: D

Special: A++

Skills:

Ruler of Death

Enhanced Resurrection

Netherworld's Miasma

Valor

Berserk

Supreme Dragon Emperor

???

His current stats were overwhelmingly high and were complemented by stronger special abilities.

Ruler of Death: Grants tactical and strategic insight. Improves intelligence. Dominance (Maximum) over Undead type monsters. Strengthening bonus (Large) to one's own Undead units, effective range is over the same dungeon room.

Enhanced Resurrection: Resurrects the dead and turns it into an undead. Upon resurrection, the unit receives improvements (Large) to his capabilities. The resurrected unit is forced to obey the skill user. This skill can never be used on the same unit twice.

Netherworld's Miasma: Clads the user in the miasma of the Netherworld. Physical Strength, Endurance, and Magic Resistance all gain bonuses (Large). The miasma does additional damage to others. It deals instant death to B rank and lower monsters. For A rank and higher, curse, poison, and debilitation are dealt. Can only be used in dragon form.

Berserk: When restraining Berserk, the user's overall performance and abilities are lowered by a rank. Some special abilities can only be used in conjunction with Berserk. Upon full release, overall capabilities are increased by a rank.

Valor: Grants Mind Resistance (Maximum). All attacks are improved (Medium). Has morale increasing effect (Small).

Supreme Dragon Emperor: Unlocked under certain conditions.

????: ???

"Wight, you really have become strong."

In terms of raw numbers, his was higher than even Kuina's stats.

"This strength is all from you, my lord, the one worthy of being called the strongest Demon Lord."

Wight lightly bowed.

In response, I smiled.

I was glad Wight had obtained immense power. Even so, there were things that worried me.

On top of the ticking time bomb that was Berserk, the ??? got me worried. It was my first time see such.

Is it an effect of using [Rebirth], I wondered.

As there was no real way to confirm, I had no choice but watch over Wight very carefully. Just what kind of trap that Creator had set-up, I had no idea.

"I'm relieved your personality didn't change when you became a Siegwurm. I'll keep on relying on you as my staff officer. As a start, I have something to consult with you."

I opened with that and then relayed to him about the soldiers from the neighboring city that were going to be dispatched to Avalon as well as the countermeasures I had thought up.

"Yes, for the most part, I also think this plan is the way forward but first, we should buy some time. We should entertain their envoys to the best of our abilities, make it look like we are going to swear allegiance, and make them

return while looking down at us. We will then tell them we wish for more time to consider the allegiance, and that we could not, at the moment, decide. They will hopefully be arrogant enough to think that the next time they come, we will simply say yes. And like that, we have gained time until the next negotiations. Time shall be our ally.”

I saw the merits of his proposal.

Since our fighting force have been increasing by the day, should this whole affair in the end come to armed conflict, even a day's time of delay was monumental.

“Okay, let’s go with that.”

“Yes. If the envoys sent to us won’t yield and we therefore weren’t able to earn time, would it perhaps be better to simply kill them, turn them into undead puppets, and make them send fake reports?”

He then gave me a villainous smile.

With his Enhanced Resurrection, the undead he made looked almost unchanged from when they were alive. In addition, they didn’t rot.

“No, let’s not do that. It isn’t so strange for them to have someone that is able to tell those envoys are actually undead. After they find out, they will then speculate that all the humans in our city are all undead and being controlled. If that false information spreads to the other human cities, it’ll be troubling, to say the least.”

If that happened, it wouldn’t be so surprising for us to go from fighting one city to fighting the entire humankind.

As far as warfare was concerned, dissemination of gossip was fair game. If a

city was known to be ruled by the undead, they would be able justify their war.

"Truly, my lord thinks so deeply. Forgive my rashness. Could I ask for the privilege of also taking part tomorrow?"

"Yes, no problem. Rather, I think I should be the one to ask you to participate."

At that, I laughed with Wight.

With that, our plans for tomorrow have been decided. There's no telling what will happen though; I can't see what's on the other side unless I cross the bridge. But first, to the preparation of the welcome. I hope I can make them enjoy our city to the utmost and return feeling good.

Note: I've changed the name of a few of Wight's skills. Like Commander of the dead to commander of wraiths. Not that it really matters now.

Chapter 4: The urge to kill beneath the smiling face

“Oto-san, big news! Lots of strange humans came. They’re demanding the highest official in the city to meet them. They’re now being handled by the Mythological Foxes.”

When I was doing paperwork as per usual, Kuina came bursting in.

This was a day she was supposed to be helping the Mythological Foxes to tend the store.

“Is that so? It seems they’re right on schedule.”

The lord of the neighboring city had sent us a letter which said they were willing to protect our city of Avalon. In name, maybe, but in practice, they were aiming to rule over us. Their first move was the dispatch of this investigative unit.

“Thanks. Shall we go meet them?”

“The ones that came, are they Oto-san’s enemies?”

“Yeah, they are.”

Her face became serious as she tightly grabbed onto my sleeve.

“Today, I’m going to stay real close to you, Oto-san, always.”

"Yes, please. It's reassuring to be with Kuina, the strongest monster."

"Yay♪"

She exclaimed so and then triumphantly smiled.

Unlike Rorono and Aura who were both mainly for domestic duties, Kuina was geared toward battle.

There might be monsters stronger than her but the chances of them appearing were probably low.

There was no one I would entrust my safety more than I do with Kuina.

"You have to promise me one thing though. Unless I say so, don't attack... except when an attack is capable of killing me."

"Okay!"

Like that, we left our home.

Along the way, we joined with Wight who was at the inn.

I had much need for his negotiation skills.

"Wight, I ask that you support me in the negotiations."

"Though my skills might not be much, I will do everything I can to be of help, my lord."

It was reassuring to have him around.

Taking the opportunity, I told him something I had in mind.

"To tell the truth, I was thinking of naming you but with our present circumstances, I can't afford to lose the use of [Creation]. So, sorry but wait a

bit longer."

Originally, I was supposed to give him a name after the last war but decided to postpone it.

Unlike the naming for a [Monster of the Covenant] where the souls of the Demon Lord and a monster were joined to improve the both of them, regular naming gave magic power beyond what the Demon Lord had to the monster and thus enhancing that monster. The drawback to this process was harsh: the inability of the Demon Lord to recover his magic power for half a month, essentially weakening him.

For that reason, naming shouldn't be done when a potential enemy was right on the horizon.

If I were to name Wight now, the chances of me getting killed would increase drastically. And, without [Creation], Avalon's growth and our acquisition of fighting force would slow down.

"Just hearing you say that fills me with joy. I'll wait for it at the end of this difficulty, then. Also, if possible, can you give me a stylish name, my lord?"

Wight smiled and I smiled back.

"Yeah, I promise. A name fitting for you who became a dragonewt. So for that to happen, we must deal with this troublesome ordeal as soon as possible."

"Yes. Since these inferior beings don't even know they're trash, it's all the more troubling."

To that, Kuina nodded.

I only gave a wry smile and continued to head to the central plaza with the

two of them.



What awaited for us there were as much as 20 human soldiers repeatedly questioning and shouting at the Mythological Foxes.

Apparently, the soldiers were told to wait while the leader of the city was being notified but got impatient and angry, shouting *how long are you going to make us wait.*

The scene of the Mythological Foxes being surrounded by these robust men was quite bizarre. If they were ordinary girls, they would have been frightened by these men already. Instead though, the Mythological Foxes seemed rather bored, trying their best to stifle a yawn.

Seeing the delegates like that, I revised my plan.

If there were any official among them that could be reasoned with, I would have negotiated with them in a somewhat intellectual manner but seeing as these soldiers were so focused on intimidating the girls, I decided to negotiate instead from a lower standpoint and flatter them.

“Oto-san, they’re strange. They’re scum but they’re talking to the Mythological Foxes as if they’re better than those girls. Do they wanna die?”

“It’s simple, really. They’re so weak they don’t even know how different they are from the girls.”

Generally, only upon belonging to the very top rank of adventurers could humans face B rank monsters in an even fight, and only by becoming as strong as heroes and champions could they finally be able to fight A rank monsters.

Meanwhile, high-ranking adventurers could fight, at the most, C rank monsters. As for the majority of adventurers, D rank monsters were their limit.

These soldiers were only as strong as high-ranking adventurers so of course the Mythological Foxes weren't strained.

Moreover, other than the Mythological Foxes, Mithril Golems which were as strong as B rank monsters were also posted to prevent thievery. Plus, upon hearing the uproar, Rorono and her disciples, the Dwarf Smiths, also came.

Plainly speaking, even if there were a hundred of these soldiers, it wouldn't have been an issue at all.

"Let's go. I feel sorry for those Mythological Foxes."

The Mythological Foxes were still putting on a smile but I could feel their irritation leaking out. If left alone, something unwanted was bound to happen.

As I thought such, young male adventurers appeared in front of the Mythological Foxes—as though to shield them—and shouted at the soldiers.

At the sight of that, I unintentionally smiled.

These men were adventurers who used Avalon as their base for going into the [Time] Demon Lord's dungeon.

They probably protected the Mythological Foxes because they were infatuated by the girls' beauty. In spite of this ulterior motive, challenging the soldiers fully garbed in armor took a fair amount of guts.

"Before I knew it, the humans have grown attached to our city."

At first, the humans had some wariness toward my monsters but was now completely familiar with them.

As for my monsters, they still looked down on the humans but they were, to

some extent, getting closer with the humans. It was a good trend.

I was glad I could confirm it in a rather harmless situation like this.

And so, I smiled to myself and walked forward.

"I'm sorry to have kept you waiting. Am I correct in assuming you gentlemen are the delegation that came from the neighboring city of Eclaba?"

I put on a face as gentle as I could muster and then looked at the Mythological Foxes, indicating that they do the same and remove any hostility they had.

And so, we humbled and deprecated ourselves.

Our goal this time was to buy time. To achieve this, we intended to charm the envoys into thinking we had no will to resist and then make them go for another visit because we could not come to a definite answer to their proposal.

"And you are?"

Each member of the delegation looked in my direction all at once. Some even placed a hand on the sword at their waist.

"I am the head of this city. I am named Procell."

A middle-aged man who seemed to be their leader drew near me and then looked at me with suspecting eyes.

"You, the representative of this settlement? Even when you're but a kid?"

Instead of referring to Avalon as a city, he regarded it as nothing but a settlement. This notion probably extended to all of them.

To them we were but a savage tribe in a savage land that needed to be managed by them.

"Yes, that is so. We have prepared a proper welcome for you; please follow me this way."

"Hmm, you said Procell, right? Do you have a family name?"

"No, I don't. I am simply Procell."

At that, the delegation leaked out a chuckle.

To them, having a family name proved that one was an aristocrat. Or a very wealthy merchant that paid a large sum of money to get a family name.

Another reason for them to belittle me.

"Whatever, just hurry it up. I'm hungry after all that walking we did to reach this damned countryside. Serve us food and alcohol! I doubt you'll dare but if you serve us inferior stuff, you know what'll happen, right?"

"Of course. We have been informed of your visit so we have prepared a feast for you."

I began to guide them to a mansion with a reception room rigged with various tricks and magical defenses that no one could see. Additionally, that room was also completely soundproof.

In the worst case scenario, we would dispose of them all there and spread the false information that they were eaten by monsters along the way.

"Say, that girl's a beast-man slave, right? Tell its master that I'll be borrowing

it for a night. I'll be taking real good care of it."

The man pointed at a Mythological Fox and said those words. In reaction, my face somewhat stiffened.

Just what is this guy thinking of doing to my monster-daughter?

"There are no slaves in this city. She is a splendid citizen of ours. So I'm afraid I can't grant that request."

"Is that so? How boring."

"We have establishments like brothels here so please feel free to enjoy your nights there. They have professionals there with good looks and great techniques. I think you'll find their services to be enjoyable."

Thanks to the ease of getting generous clients, cheap taxes, delicious food, and even the presence of a hot spring, many prostitutes who worked away from their homes came to work at the brothel in Avalon.

I estimated that these prostitutes were enough to satisfy the delegates. However, should they demand that it had to be the Mythological Foxes, I intended to kill them right away.

I had decided beforehand that some things should absolutely not be demanded of us and one of those things regarded the safety of my monsters. Should they cross the line, I would show no mercy. I would never sell out my monsters.

"Really now? Of course, they'll be for free, wouldn't they?"

"Yes. We will shoulder everything to make your stay comfortable."

At that, the man showed a disgusting expression on his face.

“Alright, it’s all good, then! I like your attitude, you know your stuff! HAHAHA!”

The man laughed as he hit my back.

At that, the fur on Kuina’s tail stood on end, showing her silent anger.

“Wait a minute”

For whatever reason, the man went toward the shop managed by the Mythological Foxes. As soon as he entered, he grabbed a sword made by the dwarves.

“Oi, you lot, come look at this. It’s amazing.”

“Commander, this sword..!?”

“With this sword, we can defeat any enemy!”

“Who would have thought we would find such a fine sword in this remote countryside!”

The soldiers were very pleased with the dwarves’ swords.

The day before, we took the sword made by Rorono—the very same high-quality sword used to attract customers—down and hid it as a precaution. If that was among the swords the soldiers had seen, it would have caused unnecessary trouble.

Anyway, as they held the mass-produced swords, the men of the delegation came up to me.

"Oi, Procell, give these swords to us! If you do, we'll put in a good word for you to our higher ups."

They said, greed visible in their eyes.

Their words were too frank and were even humorous.

"Yes, no problem. Rather, please carry them. They are one of this city's specialty products."

My answer pleased them to the point that they started doing practice swings right there and then.

After a while, the delegation finally arrived at the mansion.

After a simple inquiry—since this was an inspection after all, even if in name only—they stuffed their mouths full of food and drank as much alcohol as they could. After they were full, each member of the delegation headed to the brothel to have a good time.

I then guided them to their lodgings that I had arranged beforehand. The rooms they occupied were first class ones that cost three times as much as normal rooms. This was of course shouldered by us.

After assisting the delegation, I returned home and scrutinized the contents of their demands.

"I can't accept these conditions. They're far more than what I expected."

I intended to compromise quite a bit right from the start but their demands easily went beyond what I could tolerate.

Thankfully, Wight was there to give an evasive response.

We can't accept these exact terms but there's still room for negotiations. If we can maybe loosen their terms a bit... were my and Wight's opinion. However, I was convinced that regardless of what we would do, in the end, a war with the humans would break out.

It felt like the terms they gave were too demanding and too strict by design as though our refusal was assumed from the start. But if we did refuse their unacceptable terms, they would then have an excuse to have complete rule over us through military intervention.

But could all these really be fueled only by human greed?

Could there be a Demon Lord hiding with human society and using them?

If it was a war waged by the humans, even old Demon Lords would be able to lay their hands on me.

I couldn't help but think along these lines.

"At any rate, I should focus on getting those soldiers to be pleased with their stay here so we could stall for as long as possible."

Like that, I thought up of various strategies in my head.



In the morning of the third day since they arrived, I stood in front of our city's gate to see the delegation off.

"You've taken good care of us in the past three days. For a remote settlement, this has been quite enjoyable."

"I'm glad you're pleased. For you who have come all the way to this remote place, we did our best to make your stay as enjoyable as we can."

"Did you not think of anything this whole while? Don't you have any sense of dignity?"

The leader of the delegation gave me a suspecting look.

I wondered then if I have overdone it a bit too much.

During their whole stay, these men did whatever they pleased. Normally, a city's ruler would have probably been furious if outsiders behave as these men did. In truth, I lost count of how many times I wanted to kill them. Even so, I put up with it as though I was even glad of their continued stay.

"For us who seek to be under the protection of the empire and gain safety as soon as possible, we would not hesitate to do everything we can for you who would protect us in the future."

I calmly said things I didn't mean.

"Kuhahahaha, those are some good intentions! What a good dog you are. You're the first one to say such an obedient reply to me. Well then, in order for you to receive the protection of the empire, pledge allegiance to our lord."

"I would in a heartbeat if I could but certain adjustments within our city will have to be done first and that will take time. Once it's finished, we will send out a message so won't you graciously wait until then?"

"Hmm, I guess there's that too... very well, Procell, you miserable dog... no, you who has respect toward empire, we will wait. You probably won't do anything strange but don't make us wait too long, hurry it up!"

"Of course."

I replied so and then showed him a smile.

The delegation left with more luggage than when they arrived due to the gifts I sent their way. With that, they returned with a pleased expression on their face.

I was sure the delegation would report to their lord that I, the chief of this remote settlement, was a coward and would do anything I was told with little to no threats needed.

"Now then, just to be sure, I better ready a fighting force suited for a war against the humans."

A war against humans needed a different set of strategies and fighting force than when going against a Demon Lord in his dungeon.

Even if things don't, in the end, come to war, the preparations done would absolutely not go to waste.

With this earned time, I'll be able to prepare even more. I'll show those soldier who the real fool is.

I was the type to harbour a grudge. I would never forget the humiliation I endured this time.

Chapter 5: The Ultimate Golem

The envoys from the neighboring city had come and gone. I had endured their visit without any major incident. With that over, I began my earnest preparation for a war.

Three days had passed since the envoys left but we still haven't heard anything from the other party.

In war, what mattered most were intelligence and numbers, both of which I had committed myself to obtain.

Intelligence was the analysis of the opponent's fighting force and their usage of it. Through the [Common Knowledge] given to me upon my birth, I understood that beings called heroes and champions could match or even defeat A rank monsters. However, I didn't know how many of those beings a human city could deploy. Ten? A hundred? Or maybe a thousand? My strategy could completely change depending on that information.

My inexperienced self was unable to make a clear judgement. Due to that, I had sent out a letter to Marcho, my parent, expressing my desire to talk with her about my present situation. I intended to go to her dungeon as soon as I hear back from her.

Next, numbers.

Certainly, my monsters were outrageously strong. However, they were only a few of them. If the enemy decided to simultaneously attack from all directions, there would no doubt be gaps in our defenses.

So for that reason, I wanted to increase our numbers no matter how little.

Our numbers was the main reason I wanted to buy time.

Due to the increase of the number of humans currently living in Avalon, the founding of the brothels, gambling houses, and other such facilities that intensified the swing of emotions, I was earning about 2,000 DP a day, give or take.

It was almost equivalent to being able to buy two B rank monsters daily. As for the kinds of B rank monsters I could buy, there was the Mythological Fox that was unlocked when I created Kuina the Celestial Fox, the Dwarf Smith when I made Rorono, and the High Elves when I synthesized Aura.

Additionally, when Wight was reborn to be a Siegwurm, I was able to buy the Graphross(グラフロス), the darkness dragon.

Each and every one of these monsters was strong and had their own merits.

Moreover, Rorono could make a Mithril Golem that was as strong as a B rank monster once per day. Meanwhile, the four Dwarf Smiths could each make a C-rank-equivalent Silver or Gold Golem daily.

So, supposing I could earn a month's time of peace, I would, in total, have 90 B-rank-equivalent units and 120 C-rank-equivalent units added to my fighting force. Also, if a month did pass, I would then have another [Creation] medal and be able to make a new S rank monster with that medal.

As time passes, the odds of victory in this potential war was leaning more and more in my favor. It was due to this that I was willing to endure the humiliation and bow my head to those soldiers.

“But just winning isn’t enough. I have to win completely.”

The greatest worry I have next to having my crystal broken was having our city—which would have to stay above ground—destroyed. Even if the buildings and infrastructures could be repaired, the same couldn’t be said of the humans.

When that happens, it’s all over. I would no longer be able to feed on human

emotions and thus also no longer able to acquire DP.

Considering that, I should take the fight outside of the city...

“But then that would be a waste”

I was in a dilemma.

Taking the fighting outside of the city was the optimal choice but I would not get any emotions or DP even if my monsters killed all of the humans. This was due to the fact that the only ways to obtain DP outside of one’s dungeon was by killing an enemy yourself or being part of a party with a maximum of ten members.

That would render almost all of the potential DP to be wasted. And so, a war where I wouldn’t be able take home the hard-earned DP and human emotions was something I wanted to avoid.

On the other hand, I couldn’t simply relocate the city by swapping floors since unlike during wars with my fellow Demon Lords, time didn’t stop for the humans. So if I did swap the dungeon floors, the city would certainly be exposed.

While thinking *I have to think of some other way*, I headed to Rorono’s workshop.

Recently, she had completely stopped her production of the Mithril Golems. Additionally, almost all of the golems she made previously had disappeared from the city and were replaced by the Gold and Silver Golems made by the Dwarf Smiths.

The Mithril Golems were extremely valuable members of our fighting force even with their numbers reduced by the last [War].

“I don’t think that girl’s the kind to skip on her duties though....”

I highly valued Rorono’s diligence. *For her to disregard her duty, my orders, there must be a serious reason*, I thought.

Moreover, she hadn’t returned to our house recently. As her Demon Lord^{Father}, it was my duty to know about her situation.

“It’s Procell. I’m coming in.”

I announced myself so and entered her workshop.

The Dwarf Smiths were busy forging the mass-production type swords and repairing the equipment of the adventurers.

By Rorono’s request, I had increased the Dwarf Smith’s count from two to four but even that seemed lacking.

...I should add some more, huh.

They were an essential part of my fighting force. I saw no particular reason to hesitate in adding some more.

“Is Rorono here?”

In response to my question, a silver-haired, brown-skinned girl came to answer. It was Wight’s adjutant.

“Procell-sama, welcome and thank you for gracing us. The mistress¹ is inside the laboratory. Ah, that’s right. Ahm, Procell-sama, if you don’t terribly mind,

may I ask that you bring something to the mistress?"

Rorono was referred to by the Dwarf Smiths as their mistress since she thoroughly but also kindly imparted to them techniques regarding their craft. It certainly fitted her.

"Bread and apple?"

"Yes, it's her meal. In the past five days, the mistress have shut herself in the laboratory. Not once had she come out, not even for her meals. We've been strictly instructed to not go in there which worries us even more. But if it's Procell-sama, I thought she wouldn't mind being given this meal. So, please, Procell-sama, give it to her."

I wryly smiled.

As I expected, Rorono wasn't skipping on her duties. Rather, she was working hard on something. Something that she still haven't completed after completely secluding herself for the past five days.

I was looking forward to what that something was.



And so, I entered the laboratory that was in the inner part of the workshop.

In there, I took notice of the running gasoline-fueled power generator. Meanwhile, Rorono was busy fiddling with six PCs one after another.

My [Creation] could only make things that were in my memory. Regarding supercomputers, I knew of their existence, yes, but only that so [Creation] wasn't able to make them. To compensate for the lack of processing power, Rorono tackled it with quantity like so.

"As I thought, the basic theory is spot on. All that's left now is to have two to

match. Just a little bit more.”

Rorono did a monologue as she bit on her nail.

Maybe it was because she was too focused but she didn’t even notice I was there.

When I shifted my gazed on her foot, there was a magic tool that seemed to be able to hold two orbs. Also on the floor were dozens of golem cores.

“On adjusted values, A-17 and B-18 have the best wavelength compatibility but their outputs don’t match. Stressing stability, C-34 and A-8? No. They don’t reach the control values.”

She continued to restlessly move her eyes and hands on the keyboards of the PCs. But then she stood up, only to lose her balance. So, I hastily caught her before she crashed into the ground.

“Are you ok?”

“F-father”

Maybe it was because she was surprised but she called me Father.

“I was worried about you so I came here.”

“Mhm. Thank you for coming here, master. I was just working overtime.”

After saying so, she smiled, stood up, and took a deep breath.

“I know you’re busy on your research but can you spare me a little time?”

“Yes of course, master, but let me first just finish with a few more sets of measurements and calculations. Let’s talk while waiting for the process to finish.”

She was tired enough to lose her balance and yet... really now, this girl.

“Okay, I don’t mind. Just tell me what you’re up to once you’re finished, okay?”

“Mhm. I will.”

She said so and then placed a golem core into her seemingly self-made measuring apparatus that was connected to a PC. On the PC, she ran a self-made program and worked on it.

Over time, I had already grown accustomed to the sight of her perfectly using the PC.

“Done. I will explain everything now, master.”

“Before that, let’s take a little break.”

I gathered the piles of plans on top of a table, moved it elsewhere, and, through [Creation], took out a set of choice honey cookies and cocoa.

“But the time—”

“You have worked so hard that you almost fell down. A tired mind is an inefficient one. So, rest. This is a command. Settle down and enjoy your sweet snack and warm drink.”

When she heard me say that, she was shocked for a moment but then nodded and began to eat a cookie.

As she nibbled on her food, I noticed her face had subtly slackened. It was a response of hers when she found her food to be delicious.

She looked so cute, just like a tiny animal. Looking at her like that filled my heart with joy.

“Master, it’s hard to eat when you look at me so keenly.”

She protested as her face reddened.

“Sorry, you were just so cute. I’ll be careful not to stare.”

“Uuh, that’s even more embarrassing.”

I faintly smiled and refrained myself to just stealing glances of her every now and then.

Like so, we peacefully passed the time.



“So, just what were you working on?”

A little while after she finished the cookies and drank her cocoa, I spoke.

“A golem that would surpass a Mithril Golem.”

Her words had a profound impact on me. After all, an A rank monster couldn’t be easily obtained, not even by me. Sure, my [Creation] medal could guarantee it but that would mean the consumption of that medal along with at least one

original medal of another Demon Lord.

If we could steadily produce golems as strong as an A rank monster, being the strongest Demon Lord was guaranteed.

“Is that kind of thing possible?”

“It’s difficult but possible. But then again, I alone wouldn’t have been enough; there were far too many calculations required in the design of it. However, thanks to the tools you gave me and this laboratory environment, I could realize it.”

I looked in her eyes and saw her strong pride in her ability.

“So, how are you going to do it, exactly?”

“To begin with, the golem core is the one responsible for converting the surrounding’s mana into energy that is then made to resonate with a mineral. This process is how a golem is made. The reason why I could only make golems as strong as B rank monsters is due to the output of the golem cores being insufficient. The more magic power a mineral can hold, the greater the energy produced needed to be. The cores I make can resonate with mithril or something less while the ones made by the Dwarf Smiths can’t resonate at all with minerals that can hold magic power.”

“Then, why not just increase the output of the golem cores?”

“The cores can’t be altered upon making them and even after that.”

“How then?”

“If the output of the core itself isn’t enough, we can just make use of two.”

I unintentionally leaked out a chuckle. When she said it, I realized how awfully simple it was.

"That makes sense. But then, that seems like it's something we can easily implement."

".....It's actually not as easy as it initially sounds. If two cores with differing wavelengths and outputs are used to resonate with a mineral at the same time, they will cancel each other's power out; instead of increasing, the total output will fall down. Also, this process tends to break the cores and the lump of mineral involved."

"We can't have that. What method have you thought up, then?"

"The Twin Drive System."

She informed me so. There was a certain charm to her words.

"I stol... Ahem. I thought the idea up when I was watching the anime in the DVD master made to kill time."

It reminded me of that experiment I tried before. The said DVD was one of the interesting things I made using [Creation] after the Creator had informed me that my memory was a portion of the planet's memory. These things were greatly appreciated by Kuina and the others.

"The concept here is that if two cores can't directly resonate with the material for the golem, making the two act as one will. This basic theory has been proven to be correct. If this system is perfected, the total output won't just be the sum of the two core's output but their product, effectively squaring either core's output. This system can also be applied to any metal. So, any golem made with this will surely be as strong as an average A rank monster, if not stronger."

I gulped down.

The Mithril Golems were powerful enough, what more of these new ones, I wondered. A squared output? And since it can be used on orihalcum, it will have much better durability, magical strength, lightness, and many other things.

If such a thing could be steadily mass-produced, we would be invincible.

“Can it be done?”

“I’ve said it before but the basic theory for it is sound. I have also built a prototype. However, the cores have certain compatibility among them so I was doing a compatibility test on them. I have gathered all of the golem cores I have made until now to see which paired best.”

That explained to me why all of the golems she had made vanished from the city.

“Alright, this is an interesting research. Keep at it.”

“Mhm. I’ll absolutely complete it. Even if only one could be built for the moment, lots of data would be gathered from it, advancing my research a giant leap forward. From those further studies, I expect I would also be able to make remedies to somewhat incompatible cores. When that happens, so long as there was orihalcum, I could make an Orihalcum Golem with a twin cores once every two days.”

“That’s encouraging. By the way, I heard that your trump card, the [Mechanical Warmaiden], has troubles with its power supply but if you apply this twin drive system to that, wouldn’t that solve those issues?”

“I have also thought about that. On top of course of using twin cores, I would also make use of the furs I had plucked from Kuina’s tail to serve as a high capacity magic battery. The cores with the twin drive system would pour their extra energy into the tail so whether it be a short yet decisive battle or a prolonged one, the equipment would perform well. Also, completely changing

its materials to be orihalcum will make it considerably lighter.”

As she talked, her tone became excited and her eyes shined brightly.

She was excited with all her heart. She seemed quite mad but if my daughter was having fun, I had no qualms about it.

“I’ll be expecting much from this, Rorono. Once you’ve fully built the Orihalcum Golem, make sure to show it to me, okay?”

“Master will be the first one I’ll show it to; no one else. I won’t keep you waiting, I absolutely won’t.”

There were hints of impatience and of pain in her voice.

“Why did you try to make this in the first place? Especially since it seems so difficult, it’s almost impossible.”

She had trouble in speaking but after a while of resolving herself, she answered.

“It’s because I saw you bowing down to the humans, flattering them, and enduring their unreasonableness.”

“I’m sorry you saw me being uncool like that. I’m a failure as a Demon Lord.”

“Not at all!”

She raised her voice and stood up.

“I know Father did it to buy some time. I know you endured that for us and

the city. There's no way such a Father is uncool to me!"

My chest grew hotter. *For her to sympathize with me this much...*

"And yet! And yet, the reason Father had to smile even after being slighted by those trash, the reason you had to endure those humiliations, the reason for that is that we're weak. It's because we were weak, you had to stall for time. For making you do that, I cannot forgive myself!"

Anger and frustration were visible in her eyes. She was angry for my sake more than I was myself.

"I will never allow such a thing to happen ever again. To that end, we need a better fighting force. An overwhelming fighting force that no matter who comes, we can negotiate from a strong stand point. And so, I will build the strongest golems. Not just one of them but tens, hundreds! I'll absolutely make that happen!"

I was very grateful to her from the bottom of my heart. So much so that mere words couldn't have expressed it so I stood up and tightly embraced her.

"You have truly made me happy. You've thought of my sake that you even forgone sleep for many days and have been tirelessly researching."

"Father,"

"I won't say *don't overwork yourself* but remember that if something were to happen to you, my heart will be crushed. You're my beloved daughter, Rorono. I love you."

"Mhm. I won't let anything happen to me while also building the strongest golem as soon as possible for you, Father."

I smiled and parted from our embrace though it seemed Rorono was little unwilling to do the same.

“I’ll head back now; I have disturbed you long enough.”

“Understood. See you later, Father.”

“Yeah, see you.”

Just when I said so, a notification came from a PC.

“The matching tests had begun after the measurements were done. I’ll take a look.”

She said so and stared into the PC’s screen.

After a short while, her face brightened with a wide smile.

“Father, I’ve found the cores with the highest affinities. It will surely work with these cores. Just a little bit more and I can show you the results tomorrow!”

“That’s great. Do your best on the last remaining steps.”

“Yes, of course. ...also, Father, if it all goes well, praise me a lot. ...and hug me like earlier.”

“That goes without saying.”

“Mhm!”

Like so, I left her workshop.

As the night breeze hit me, I reflected on some things.

"I failed to consider Rorono's and the other's feelings."

I had overlooked how my actions could affect those around me.

I resolved myself to do better next time. It was a thing I must do to become a good Demon Lord^{Father}.

If Rorono's new golem could make it in time for the next war, our chances of victory would all the more be better. I felt guilty for letting her overwork herself but I couldn't help really looking forward to the new addition to our fighting force.

Chapter 6: Avalon's Knight, Complete

When I was enjoying breakfast together with Kuina and Aura the day after I checked up on Rorono, Rorono came bursting in.

“It’s finished, the strongest golem’s finally finished!!”

She was visibly tired. Her hair was ruffled and her grooming was a little poor. Her eyes were heavy with bags and yet, it burned brightly.

She most probably spent all of the previous night working on completing the strongest golem by installing the twin cores into the best body made of orichalcum.

She didn’t even have to say a word; her excitement alone was enough for me to know her news.

“Well done, Rorono.”

I praised her so, walked toward her, and then embraced her. Upon doing so, she hugged me back.

“Ah! Rorono-chan’s so sneaky.”

“Now, now, Kuina-chan, calm down. The strongest golem that Rorono-chan’s speaking of seems like a really amazing thing. It’s truly worthy of praise.”

Kuina and Aura looked at Rorono and me as they conversed.

"Uhhh. I understand. But Kuina too will do amazing things so that Oto-san will praise me as well."

Kuina's somewhat innocent remark worried me a little. She was skilled in combat but not so much in administrative affairs. *I just hope her efforts won't be in vain...*

"I wanted to say show it to me immediately but let's get to that after you've eaten a meal. You haven't eaten anything after those cookies, correct?"

We didn't need to eat food to survive but we enjoyed doing it all the same. It brought us peace of mind which was something we did need.

"Mhm, alright, I'll show it to master as soon as the meal is over."

"Aura, if you don't mind."

"Already on it."

Before I had noticed, Aura was no longer where she was and had moved to the nearby kitchen.

The smell of butter then drifted in the air. Using butter and eggs procured from Avalon, she was expertly making some scrambled eggs. Concurrently, she was also grilling some crisp bacon.

Afterwards, she sandwiched both bacon and egg into a bread made by the Skeletons and then garnished it with her self-made flavorings.

Based on this sandwich alone, one could tell Aura's culinary skills were truly superb.

As for dessert, there were the golden apples from the First Tree. Its effects

were similar to before, only stronger. Its effects were so strong, I suspected it could even extend a person's lifespan.

These golden apples were now part of our daily breakfast and thanks to that, we were in great health.

Rorono greedily munched on the food Aura served before her. The apple too was gone in an instant.

"These apples really have much greater effects than before. If I had these, I could research for at least year without ever needing to sleep."

Pfft, I almost spewed out the tea I was enjoying after our meal.

While it was indeed true that these golden apples could make one unaffected by fatigue...

"Don't do that, Rorono. Your body might remain fine but your mind won't."

"Sorry."

She apologized like that and then tasted the apple juice she held in her hand.

"Now that you've finished your meal and have also rested, won't you show us the might of the new golem you just made?"

"Ok, leave it to me."

Like that, we went out to see the new golem. It wasn't just me and Rorono; Kuina and Aura were also quite interested in seeing in it.



We relocated to the training area within the Mines.

In there, we didn't have to worry about being seen by the public so we could go as wild as we desired.

And so, Rorono activated the star of the show, the Orichalcum Golem.

"It's a very stylish golem, isn't it?"

"Its power will remain exceedingly high even with a slim design so I went with that, made it light-weight, and emphasized speed."

The golems she had made up to this point stood at around 3 meters high and had very broad bodies. Their bodies were so broad, they seemed short and stout despite their height.

This one was different though. It was two and a half meter tall with a rather slender build. It was close in appearance to a human, a very tall yet slender human.

It had the shine peculiar to orichalcum which was somewhere in-between gold and silver.

But most of all...

"It has such an amazing amount of magic power."

"Mhm. As I've said before, with the twin drive system, the two golem cores resonate not only with the orichalcum but to each other as well. This results in the total output not being the sum of the two cores' individual outputs but their product. In this case, since the cores are highly attuned to one another, the total output is effectively the square of either cores' output. Their magic power rivals that of an average A rank monster's."

As expected they weren't as strong as Kuina and the others but they were still plenty strong.

“And how does the prospect of the mass production of these golems stand?”

“I would say it’s possible but I can’t guarantee when it can begin until I have analyzed this child’s test results. I intend to make it practice in the [Crimson Cavern] while I conduct further research.”

I see, that’s good, I thought.

I still haven’t seen it move and yet I could already sense the countless possibilities that could come from this golem.

“So, what kind is this child?”

Kuina asked Rorono so.

“This one is designed for general purposes. With the fact that it is tenacious enough to endure the output of the twin cores in mind, this little one is genuinely tough, fast, and strong. The range of movements it can perform is quite similar to humanoid beings. It can also make use of whatever weapon a humanoid can use. This one will serve as the fundamental design but as my study makes progress, I intend to also deploy golems that specialize in long-range combat, in close-quarters combat, and in mobility.”

When she became one of my [Monsters of the Covenant], Rorono obtained the ability to customize the golems. She had already made specialized golems before but considering this was the first one to make use of the twin drive system, a general purpose type was probably for the best.

“Try making it move now, Rorono.”

“Alright. Let’s start with basic movements.”

Like that, Rorono gave commands to the golem.

It started with an all-out dash, suddenly changed its course and then jumped.

At that, Aura clapped her hands.

Such speed, I thought. It was so fast it would make one forget that golems were known for their slowness.

“With the cores’ excessively high output, the improvements to the joints for improved movement, and its light orichalcum body, this much movement is within expectations.”

Rorono somewhat triumphantly declared so.

“Next, weapons.”

The new golem picked up a heavy-machinegun usually used by the Mithril Golems. After a few moments, the new golem then ran as it fired the long and weighty heavy-machinegun.

“Are you kidding me?”

This weapon was indeed strong but its weight and recoil were no joking matter. And yet, the heavy-machinegun often used on a fixed position was wielded much like one would an assault rifle.

Even the Mithril Golems with all their might wouldn’t be able to handle the weapon as skillfully and would therefore take considerable amounts of time to adjust their aims from the recoil.

To top it off, the new golem jumped into the air and continued firing.

“Again, with this new golem, this much is expected. Now... to test its defense. Kuina, try firing your shotgun at it.”

“Understood.”

Kuina took out her favorite shotgun and fired it.

Bang.

Rorono has made various improvements to this shotgun which included: a larger caliber; the use of mithril powder in the bullets so that one could insert their own magic power into it to further increase the damage; the [Explosion] enchantment which, after firing, makes the shell explode and scatters the shots more forcefully.

With all of these improvements, even an A rank monster would be shot through. If the target was an ordinary golem, it would most probably be turned into scrap metal. As for the new golem...

“It’s almost unscathed?”

I let out a voice of surprise. There were a few scratches on its surface but that was pretty much it.

“Rorono-chan, what, it’s so tough. It kinda reminds me of that Orichalcum Gargoyle from before.”

“This is tougher than that. In order to increase its defense and ward off impact, its outer armor is designed to be rounded. Moreover, magic power is also made to flow to its armor, further increasing its durability. Next, let’s conduct tests for its magic defense. Kuina, try casting your flames into it.”

“Are you sure?”

“I’m sure.”

“Alright!”

Kuina gathered her magic power and formed a lump of high-density flame on the top of her palm. Shortly afterwards, it flew like an arrow.

Burning as hot as the sun itself, it made a direct hit. Should Rorono or Aura were to receive that hit, it might be fatal even for them.

The arrow of flame hit the golem in its chest and then engulfed it whole.

After a while, the flame disappeared.

While the golem... it remained unharmed.

“In order to move its limbs, magic power is made to circulate throughout its body but due to the cores’ excessively high output, some of the magic power leaks. And so, this excess power, through the magic arrays already installed in the golem, is then used to act like a shield at all times against magical attacks. Additionally, its material itself, orichalcum, is immensely resistant to magic. With all these, the golem is nigh invulnerable against magic.”

Overwhelming speed, offense, and defense... this golem had it all.

“Impressive, Rorono.”

“I’m proud of this golem. However, it does have a weakness. It’s quick and resilient but that’s pretty much it. Physical attacks are all it can do; against an opponent where physical attacks are ineffective, this golem’s powerless. Moreover, there are still enemies that can break through its defense. For example, it might have been able to withstand Kuina’s shotshell just now but if she switches to using slug shells and keep shooting at the same spot over and over again, the golem’s defenses will crumble. Kuina is also fairly capable of dodging the hail of bullets coming from its heavy-machinegun. Moreover, even though I said it’s nigh invulnerable against magic, if Kuina were to use her future form, the golem will surely burn to ashes in the end.”

"Naturally!"

Kuina puffed her chest as she confirmed.

"Aura and her anti-materiel rifle are also capable of defeating this child. Like Kuina, she can similarly target a point over and over again until it breaks, only this time from a much longer distance away. In the first place, with her as the opponent, no matter how the golem tries, none of its attacks would reach her when she's up in the sky."

"Yeah, that's right. If I were to fight it, I'll do it like that, rapid-firing from high in the sky. That way, gravity will serve as my friend. All of its attacks will be weighed down by gravity, in which case, the power and range of the attack will be decreased. In the meantime, all of my attacks will improved by gravity. The whole thing can't even be called a fight anymore."

"The golem will also be near powerless to Wight's miasma. No matter how high its magic resistance may be, it wouldn't be able to do anything against the miasma. The other way around, the golem's bullets wouldn't affect Wight since before they even hit, they would be dissolved by the miasma.And then, it goes without saying that this child is also no match against me."

Yes, it was by no means invincible. Another way of looking at it though was that one had to be on a similar level as these girls first before he could reliably win against the golem.

"Its main draw isn't its strength. First of all, it's the fact that it can be mass-produced. In the near future, we would have hundreds of A-rank-equivalent golems. Secondly, it's versatile. Since they can wield any kind of weapon, they can respond to any situation with the right weapon in hand. Next is its adaptability in the sense that it can battle in whatever terrain, be it under the water, within a volcano, on an iceberg, on the plains, on the wastelands, or even in outer space where there's no air. Lastly, its ability to fight in a prolonged

war. These children will never tire and will never need sleep. These children have everything one can look for in a soldier; these children are the [Perfect soldiers].”

The more I heard, the more fearsome the new golem sounded and I unintentionally gulped down.

If there was something I could add to what Rorono said, it was that this new golem could be disposable units. There was no need to worry their loss. I could nonchalantly send them to suicidal missions, something I would never dare order to Kuina and the others.

“Rorono, advance their mass-production with all haste. These golems will be useful.”

“Yes, that’s the plan. I will also include any improvements I have found into the final versions. I’ll also make basic weapons with them in mind.”

Geez, each and every one of my subordinates is so reliable.

I was so thankful for Rorono. I dreaded to imagine what it would be like if she was another Demon Lord’s subordinate.

“Rorono-chan, what will you call this child? It’s using special cores so calling it an ordinary name like Orichalcum Golem is so boring!”

“Surely, yeah. They’re this strong after all. Can’t you give them a better name?”

After hearing Kuina and me, Rorono placed a hand on her chin.

“The twin cores can only be implemented by me and, by extension, only by Avalon... Also, this child will be Avalon’s guardian. Moreover, this child is

already a being outside of the convention of golems and thus can't really be called one. So, for the golems equipped with a twin drive, I want to call them as Avalon-Ritter."

I smiled. *Avalon-Ritter. It's pretty good.*

"Ok, from now on, they shall be called Avalon-Ritter. Make more of them, Rorono."

"Yes! Leave it to me!"

With that, we concluded the day's experimentation.

When we were about to return to our house, a blue bird landed on my shoulder.

It was the one given to me by [Wind] Demon Lord Stolas so that we could exchange letters.

However, she wasn't the only one I have been corresponding with recently; it had also committed to its memory the magic power of Marcho as well as that of the [Time] Demon Lord Dantalian.

"It's from Marcho? She can make time for me tomorrow? Great."

I had sent her a letter which detailed my wish to meet with her and be advised on what I should do when the potential war against the humans do indeed happen. I didn't imagine she would reply this fast though.

I would soon be imposing myself on her. Of course, I wouldn't come empty-handed. As was proper when visiting another Demon Lord, I was going to bring a gift as compensation for her time.

And so, I sent out the blue bird to Marcho's dungeon to confirm our meeting.

Chapter 7: Marcho's Advice and Anger

It has been a while since I last came to Marcho's dungeon.

I arrived here using the transfer array I had set up with her permission.

The only ones I brought along were my three [Monsters of the Covenant] and the crow monster that could use [Transfer].

It hasn't even been a year since I was last here but I felt nostalgic.

I contemplated on whether to bring Wight as well since he also lived here before. However, since he was my staff officer, he was to be the one in charge of Avalon's administration and defense whenever I'm not there and so, in the end, I decided to make him stay.

Anyway, we met with the Succubus in the residential area and petitioned for an audience with Marcho. However, we were asked to wait for a while. So, instead of idling, we chose to visit the house we used to live in before.

"It hasn't changed, has it?"

"It's exactly as we left it!"

Kuina cheerfully responded to my comment. The house we used to live in looked just like when we left it.

When Marcho inquired about what to do with the furniture, I asked her to keep it so them still being here didn't surprise me. What surprised me though was that it was almost exactly as we left it; almost no dust had accumulated anywhere which was contrary to what I predicted. *Somebody must have been cleaning it, I thought. I might just have caught a glimpse of Marcho's thoughtfulness.*

Anyway, Kuina and Rorono each went to the private rooms they used before and acted freely.

"I'm a little envious, actually. We moved to Avalon as soon as I was born so I don't have a lot of memories in this place."

Aura said so as she watched the two.

What she said was true since I made her just before I made Avalon.

"You don't have to be envious. You just have to make a lot of memories in Avalon from now on to make up for it."

"Yes, master!"

Aura smiled and replied so.

After a while of relaxing about, the Succubus came to us. She was the one in charge of this residential area due in part to her ability to use [Transfer].

"Marchosias-sama is ready to receive you. It seems her previous audience dragged on; I'm sorry for the delay."

"Don't worry about it. We passed the time in a meaningful manner. More than that, her previous audience?"

The idea of her having a meeting with somebody other than me piqued my interest quite a bit.

".....Ah, please forget about that. I'm going to [Transfer] you now so please gather near me."

The Succubus only openly changed the subject. She was most probably forbidden to talk about it so I decided to not push the matter any further and did as she advised.

“Yeah, take care of us then.”

“Here, I go. [Transfer].”

Like so, our consciousness faded away.



Upon completion of our Transfer, we surveyed our surroundings and confirmed that it was indeed Marcho’s room.

It was lined up with top-grade—but not gaudy—furnishings. And on the eye-catching throne that gave off an intimidating feeling was a white-haired, brown-skinned beautiful girl with a wolf’s ears and tail.

She had a grim expression on her face and looked as though she was thinking deeply. However, as soon as she noticed us, she casted that expression off in exchange for a softer one.

Her previous guest must not have been the most agreeable fellow.

“I’m glad you came, Procell. It’s been a while.”

“Yes, it has.”

“But it seems that while I wasn’t looking, you’ve grown big, Procell-chan. Your big sister’s moved to tears. You’re growing up so fast.”

“What am I, a kid!?”

I inadvertently said that out loud.

As I did, she looked at me and smiled.

"Yeah, you are. As far as I'm concerned, you're still a child. You're much too green for a Demon Lord. You may have grown but you still have a long road ahead of you."

I had nothing to say back to her for I knew myself that, as a Demon Lord, I was still a novice.

"Geez, you really know how to mess with my rhythm. Anyway, let me say my thanks for finding the time for me today. Thank you."

"It's alright. I wanted to meet with you, anyways. Whenever I hear rumors about you, my heart would always skip a beat. You're being absurd, I thought... But then, for your first actual war, you got yourself into a three versus one. Against enemies who have received three fully grown A rank monsters, no less. I thought my heart was going to give out back then."

"I also think that I made a blunder there. I was a tad too obstinate back then."

My chance of winning even against an alliance was rather high so I let myself get caught up in [Steel]'s plans. However, had I wanted to avoid it altogether back then, I would have been perfectly able to; there was nothing stopping me aside from my overconfidence and my obstinacy.

But then again, that was before I knew their alliance had received powerful monsters from their parents. Had I known this fact from the start, not even my obstinacy would have prevented me from avoiding that three on one war at all cost.

The only reason I won that war was because all of my monsters performed much better than I had expected. There was a lot I needed to reflect on in order to not make that kind of mistake again.

“Even though you don’t look it, you’re quite a bullheaded man, aren’t you? I as your parent am beside myself with worry, you know?”

“Yeah, sorry. I’ve been a bad kid.”

“Tell me about it.”

Macho and I looked at each other and smiled.

“Can we get to the main topic now?”

“Hmm, before that, I have noticed your greatest flaw, Procell.”

“My flaw?”

“Yes, and as a Demon Lord, it’s a fatal one.”

The shock given by those words was too much. Naturally, I recognized the flaw that I was still much too green but one that could be said to be fatal? I had not noticed such.

“Tell it to me please.”

“Yeah, okay. I’ll say it plainly: you, as a Demon Lord, lack majesty!”

She pointed a finger at me and then declared so.

To which I unintentionally and also impolitely replied *Haa!?*

“Ah, what a weird face you have. Listen, this is important. Majesty, reverence, or any such dreadful aura is necessary to a Demon Lord. If you don’t have any, you will be made light of by the humans and by your subordinate monsters. For that reason, practice drawing out your Demon Lord aura here and now. If you

make use of this throne, even you will be able to bring it out. So, go ahead and sit.”

She stood from her throne and told me to sit there. And so, I sat on it. Her throne, through its appearance, did make me feel a little bit stronger.

“Give me a bit more villainous smile.”

“Li-like this?”

“More, give me more confidence! ...Yes, yes, I’m feeling it a little. Now, alright, let’s make use of those girls. Celestial Fox, Elder Dwarf, you two try standing beside your master and leaning on him.”

Kuina and Rorono both wore strange expressions on their face. After a short while, Kuina spoke.

“Kuina is Oto-san’s monster and will not listen to anyone’s command besides Oto-san’s.”

Rorono nodded in agreement.

Geez, these girls really are reliable.

“Oh, yeah, okay. This is a necessary lesson for you as a Demon Lord so, Procell, if you please.”

“Alright. Let’s just try this out once, okay?”

Although I was doubtful myself, I commanded the two to come closer.

“Hmm, act more spoiled? Ah, Celestial Fox, act sexier. Yes, yes.”

Marcho directed the two on which pose to take until, finally, she nodded in satisfaction.

“How is it, Marcho? Do we look intimidating now?”

I asked so but no answer immediately came.

Marcho just looked at us. After a short while, she began trembling and soon after, she burst into laughter.

“Ahaha. This is so awful. Yeah, you sure look intimidating but, but more than that... Pfft. You really are Lolicell! Ahahaha!”

She very rudely said so and I was slightly hurt.

“That’s enough for today. I take it we have accomplished being intimidating, at the very least.”

“Ahaha, yeah, yeah... I guess for going along with that jest, I’ll tell you your real weakness.”

Marcho and I exchanged positions and she sat on her throne again. After a while of putting on airs, she spoke. I was now more on guard; I wasn’t about to be made fun of again.

“Your monsters are strong, ridiculously so. Of that, there is no arguing. Any ordinary, inexperienced Demon Lord would be helplessly defeated when faced with a three on one fight. Your strength and growth speed is astonishing. ...but

then, that is all you have going for you.”

Those words rang true to my heart.

“You immensely lack intelligence gathering capabilities. Your monsters are great in battle as well as in production but that’s pretty much it. Moreover, you yourself extremely lack political strength. You see, first-class Demon Lords would have their monsters scatter everywhere to serve as their eyes and ears. They also have the cooperation of their fellow Demon Lords under their belt. And that cooperation isn’t limited to just the sharing of information, mind you. ...that’s not the end of it. Some Demon Lords would even go so far as to infiltrate human countries and take control of those places’ governments. The scum I hate most is masquerading himself as the god of a religion that has a lot of believers in a certain country, effectively giving him reign over the place.”

My weaknesses were pointed out.

I had nothing to argue against her; she was right on the mark. It was only thanks to the blue bird I got from [Wind] Demon Lord Stolas as well as the crow monster I got from the [Time] Demon Lord that I had a way to communicate and travel, respectively. However, among the monsters that I myself created, there wasn’t any that could fulfill those roles, much less for intelligence gathering.

There were a lot of cases where information became more important than having numbers. A blind army might as well be a dead one, after all. To neglect gathering information was indeed a fatal flaw.

“Let me tell you how fatal your flaw is. I currently have a certain monster hidden within your city. If I know that you can harvest golden apples in your city, you can bet I also know about the absurdly strong weapons that your Elder

Dwarf is developing as well as your plans for the mass-production of those beyond-normal golems. What makes it worse is that you haven't even realize your secrets are being leaked out. Now, imagine what would happen if I were a hostile Demon Lord."

I was shocked.

How can she know so much? Did she make use of a monster's ability to see through all of my secrets?

It then dawned on me that if Marcho was able to do so, the [Time] Demon Lord could have as well, given his interest in me. My caution around the crow monster would then be all for nothing.

In addition to them, some other Demon Lord may already have eyes and ears deployed somewhere in my city.

"That's frightening. I have truly taken things too lightly. I may have relied on my Monsters of the Covenant's presence sensing abilities."

"So long as you're aware of your weakness, you, in particular, can make a monster to cope with that weakness, wouldn't you agree? With your [Creation], you can choose the possibility you want from the countless others. Besides, you're smart; I trust you'll make the most efficient choice."

Marcho, after saying so, pouted somewhat.

My [Creation] medals truly were enviable; they were just too convenient.

"Yeah, I'll do that. I've decided on how to use my next [Creation] medal. Thanks."

I had vaguely thought of adding another fighting unit but have now decided to

gear the next monster to have intelligence gathering capabilities and let the Avalon-Ritters be the increase in our fighting strength.

"That ends Professor Marcho's lesson on being a Demon Lord. We are both pressed for time so let's end the idle chitchat now. Okay, Procell, I have the general understanding of your circumstances after reading your letter. It seems you are being targeted by the humans."

"Yeah. A notification came demanding pretty much to be under the control of the lord of a neighboring city, a city called Axera(アクセラ). It is very likely that we will come to war with each other."

Since I was going to borrow her knowledge, I told her everything without holding anything back.

"So what you want to know is their fighting force for when it does come to war, is that right?"

"Yeah. I want to know how many soldiers will be deployed if all we're talking about is the city of Axera."

"That city has a population of 200,000, give or take. Generally, a city like that would have at least 10 that belong to the hero class and about a hundred that belong to what is referred to as the highest rank for adventurers. After those, there should be about 3,000 in their army. These numbers are what they can gather internally without difficulty, mind you. When they begin calling for reinforcements from cities they are allied to, expect their numbers to increase even more."

"I see. That gives me relief; I won't be defeated with that amount."

In terms of monster ranks, the hero class would be the A rank monsters.

So, if the strongest fighting force the enemy had were just 10 A ranks, I saw no problems; Kuina alone could wipe the floor with them.

The remaining 3000 small fries didn't pose a threat either.

"Again, those numbers are assuming you will go to war with that one city. If you, by some chance, go to war with the entire country, their numbers will at least be tenfold."

"I won't let it come to that."

I have been secretly preparing various arrangements with merchants to ensure the fighting would be limited with that one city.

"One other point, a warning really. Though heroes are regarded as equivalent to A rank monsters, that is on average. What I mean is that once in a while, a monstrously strong hero comes along so don't lower your guard.Still, something has been bothering me. This upcoming war is a little strange. I feel like the humans are mobilizing far too quickly. Humans, you see, take an awful lot of time deciding on something, and even more time enacting it. If the city's lord is acting on his whim, yeah, maybe, but all things considered, that city isn't likely to be capable of doing so."

I had also thought that. And so, I decided it was safer to assume the enemy had twice the fighting force.

"Thanks to you, my course of action is decided."

"I'm glad to hear that. So, Procell, I've given you this much information, what do you plan on giving me in return? Fufu, I'm your parent so I want to treat you as kindly as I can but then again, you've already left my nest, right? Plus, you've rejected me back then. Given all these, should you really be this dependent on me? It can't be that just because I'm your parent, you think it's only natural that I help without anything in return, now can it?"

She put on a rather sad face and looked at me.

She's really shrewd... no, she might be saying all these to teach me something.

That thought came to me but it didn't bother me at all. It was my intention from the very start to compensate her, anyway.

"Your many advice, this time and those before, have been greatly helpful. So to properly give my thanks, I want to propose something."

"...Oh, this is getting interesting. State your proposal."

"The end of your lifespan is within the year but do you have no intention to live even beyond your lifespan?"

A Demon Lord has a lifespan of 300 years and Marcho was at her last year. My intended compensation for her was a life beyond those 300 years.

"Just what do you mean by that?"

"Exactly as I said. If you'd recall, I was given a power called [Rebirth] by the Creator. I have already used that power on Wight and made him into a powerful monster. It was then that I confirmed it: that power isn't limited to just monsters. Whatever the being is, so long as they agree, they can be turned into a medal. Even Demon Lords, I'd wager. So, after temporarily turning you into a medal via [Rebirth] and then using that medal in a [Synthesis], I can extend your lifespan."

I adored Marcho. As my guardian and as my friend.

And due to that, I felt that I didn't want to part with her.

I believed that with [Rebirth], I could save her.

It was also greatly advantageous for me; it would be reassuring to have her brains and brawn on my side.

For these reasons, I proposed this idea to her.

“Go home.”

She hid her face and said so.

“Marcho?”

“You have said something you shouldn’t have.”

She continued with a calm and yet angry tone in her voice.

“Just what did I say to make you that angry??”

“Your proposal is an affront to me, no, to all Demon Lords—*except that bastard*. Within my limited life: I’ve risked it all and got everything I wanted in return; and have made my mark upon the world. After my imminent death, I shall once more become a spirit. That is how it’s supposed to be, that is the golden path for us Demon Lords. I have no intention of throwing away my pride. You disappoint me, Procell. I never thought you would say something similar to what that bastard said. I don’t wish for a longer life. I have no regret in my life; I lived as I saw fit. You sully me with your conceit.”

I was greatly stunned. I couldn’t comprehend all of what Marcho was saying.

Seeing me like that, Marcho seemed to have calmed down a little. After taking a breath, she hid her eyes with her hand and spoke.

“Sorry, Procell. I don’t think I can calmly talk with you anymore; I might snap again. I guess the timing of your visit’s to blame. My head knows I shouldn’t involve you but I just can’t hold back my irritation.”

With that, I judged that any further talks would be for naught.

"Marcho, I'm sorry for making you angry but just let me say this: I want to be with you for a longer time. To part with you within a year's time breaks my heart. I want you to continue living and so I proposed this. It isn't my intention to make light of you or your pride.I thank you once again for your advice and information. Won't you at least please take this? It's my city's prized apple."

I passed the golden apple to Marcho. I wanted her to eat it so I brought some with me.

She didn't reply but she at least accepted the apple.

"Well, I'll go now. My city's great, you know? We have delicious food, a hot spring, taverns to drink fine alcohol, even gambling houses. Recently, traveling minstrels have also come there and sing good songs for us. It'll have to be until the fighting is over but please consider visiting Avalon. ...I'll do my best to welcome you."

Right when I finished my speech, by Marcho's command, the Succubus used [Transfer].

A moment before the Transfer process was complete, I thought I heard Marcho say in low, almost inaudible voice, *I'm sorry*.

I contemplated for a while. As Marcho had said, I might have wounded her pride as Demon Lord. However, I still thought her reaction was strange and excessive. It worried, to be honest.

Nevertheless, I had no time to spare and had to give all of my attention to the

enemy before me.

I settled for the decision that if ever I had the time, I would go check up on Marcho. With my mind made up, I instructed the crow monster to use [Transfer] to return us back to Avalon.

Chapter 8: The Darkness Dragon Graphross

After we came back home, I unconsciously spoke to myself out loud.

“I messed up; I’ve made Marcho angry.”

After I brought up the topic of [Rebirth], Marcho was enraged.

Even if I was being selfish, I had no ill intention; I just wanted her to live longer.

That said, her anger was understandable.

I half-expected her—one of the strongest Demon Lords—to be insulted by my offer to become my monster through [Rebirth] so I had prepared to persuade her but it felt like what enraged her was the very idea of extending her life itself.

“Oto-san, you’re making a sad face.”

“It’s because Marcho’s angry at me.”

Based on her personality, it was extremely unlikely for Marcho to become hostile and harass me.

Nevertheless, she was an important friend. Being in a quarrel with her is painful.

“Does Oto-san like Marcho?”

“I do. She’s someone I respect. She has also taken good care of me.”

"Then, make up with her! If you say you're sorry, it'll probably make things ok, somehow!"

Kuina said so and I smiled. There were some truth to her words though. And so, I decided to visit Marcho again after she had calmed down a little and apologize with all sincerity.

"You're right. I'll go properly apologize to her some time later, with a gift while I'm at it.say, Kuina, when I reach the end of my lifespan and die, will you mourn for me?"

Upon hearing my question, she looked as though she was about to cry. She then hugged my right arm tightly.

"Kuina will be devastated. I absolutely don't want that to happen. Oto-san has to always be together with Kuina!"

Looking at her react like that made me feel happy, somewhat.

"I also don't want to die, of course. But that's all the more reason why I can't understand Marcho. I'd absolutely hate it to leave my adorable monsters behind and will therefore do whatever is necessary to be with you all longer, even if that means lowering myself to be another Demon Lord's monster. I thought all other Demon Lords would think so as well but apparently, that is just my hubris speaking."

Maybe in the course of my long life, I'll have a change of mind. For the moment though, it's a sentiment I just can't comprehend.

I then recalled my conversation with Marcho.

She had said that somebody else had proposed something similar to my own proposal. That somebody probably was another Demon Lord and that Demon Lord was most probably [Time] Demon Lord Dantalian.

There was a chance that with his ability, he's able to stretch the 300 year lifespan of us Demon Lords.

"Kuina won't let Oto-san die. If it's to keep you alive, Kuina will do anything. Foxes are symbols for longevity so maybe if Oto-san eats Kuina, Oto-san will live longer!"

"Master eating Kuina is totally out of the question but I agree that we can't let you die, master. With the power of science, we should be able to overcome anything, even lifespans. If we have as much time as 300 years, my research to overcome your lifespan will be complete by then... I will absolutely make it so."

"It's not just science either; don't make light of the power of nature. I will prepare the right food and environment that let you live a healthy and long life! If my powers increase further, I'm confident I can make a real Tree of Life that will surpass even the current World Tree we have now!"

Kuina as well as Rorono and Aura all spoke encouraging words to me.

It made me happy. However, strangely, I laughed involuntarily.

"Geez, you all. Thank you. That really made me glad. But don't worry 'cause I'm not going to leave you all behind."

I then pet each of my beloved daughters' head.

Every one of them is a long-lived monster. They would age only until they have reached the most suitable age and form for combat. Moreover, they would continue to live long after I'm gone. Denying the fate of living on without

me, they said they would do whatever it would take to prolong my life.

I'm filled with joy but now is the time for actions.

"Kuina, take some low level monsters and go hunt in the [Crimson Cavern]. Take along the Avalon-Ritter too. Its level won't rise but I want some battle data collected. I'll also increase the number of Mythological Foxes by two. They're very useful monsters with their speed, agility, and presence sensing capabilities so make sure to train them well."

"Yeah! Kuina will raise her new little sisters properly!"

Kuina raised her hand and answered so. Her fox-ears were standing up too; an indication that she was motivated.

"Rorono, is it necessary for you to be there and directly control the Avalon-Ritter?"

"No. Battle protocols have been stored in its memory."

"Understood. Then, Kuina, I'll leave the data collection to you. As for you, Rorono, continue your research on their mass-production. That shall be our key to victory in the upcoming war. I expect much from you."

"Roger. I will not disappoint your expectations, master."

Rorono, with a serious expression on her face, nodded and immediately headed for her workshop.

"Aura, figure out a way to hasten Kohaku's recovery. We cannot afford to let him be idle. He may not be as strong as you girls in combat but he has experience that we sorely lack. He'll definitely be helpful."

"Certainly, please leave it to me. He'll be in better physical condition than ever before!"

"Also, tell him I'm going to borrow his wisdom later regarding intelligence gathering monsters. I just can't believe that we have an intruder even you can't detect. So, I want to know those kind of monsters' nature, to understand them, and to know how they can scout without any problems."

"Okay, I'll relay that to Kohaku-san!"

Aura bowed and left.

With that, each of my Monsters of the Covenant began their work.

Not to be outdone by them, I went to work on my own set of duties as well.



I entrusted Kuina with the two newly born Mythological Foxes. I also made new Dwarf Smiths High Elves—two of each to be exact—and entrusted them to Kuina as well.

Avalon's population have grown recently and with that, so too did the work for Rorono's smithing workshop as well as Aura's orchard. Given that it was a necessary expense anyway and the fact that I had some DP to spare, I bought the new monsters.

Even after that, I still had 12,000 DP remaining.

I decided then to make the monster I was allowed to buy when I used Rebirth on Wight—the darkness dragon Graphross.

By the way, I didn't have any [Creation] medal at the moment to make an intelligence gathering monster of my own. Until then, I decided to expand fighting force.

There was no way I could summon a dangerous looking monster such as the darkness dragon within my city of Avalon without any questions being asked so

I moved to the mining area.

“The aerial bombardment corps have proven their usefulness on the last war but the Hippogriffs, I really don’t have much confidence in them.”

The Hippogriffs were D rank monsters I was able to buy when I made the B rank Griffon.

When deployed as part of the aerial bombardment corps, their low attack power was compensated for but there still were many issues.

First was that they were slow. Although they could fly in the sky, their speed wasn’t anything to write home about when talking about monsters.

Next was that they were weak. It wouldn’t matter so much when they are one-sidedly attacking from the sky but against a strong enemy monster that could, in some capacity, fly in the sky as well, the Hippogriffs could hardly compete.

They were also at a disadvantage against monsters that had some form of anti-air attack.

All that said, in the end, they are only D rank monsters.

The darkness dragon Graphross on the other hand is a B rank monster. Furthermore, it’s a strong dragon monster capable of flight. Dragon monsters are usually stronger even against monsters of the same rank.

The darkness dragon’s fighting capabilities are the real deal. They can pretty much ignore arrows coming from the ground. And, as long as their enemies aren’t A rank flying monsters, they’re untouchable in the sky.

Furthermore, they can fight on their own even after dropping the bomb they carried.

I was of the thought that if I make an aerial combat unit featuring the darkness dragons, Avalon’s fighting strength would skyrocket.

Additionally, to further increase the Avalon-Ritters' effectiveness, I was also thinking of making them cooperate with the air units. The Hippogriffs wouldn't be able to carry out this strategy due to their limited carry weight which in turn was brought by their lack of physical strength.

If this strategy were to be carried out, it may very well overhaul [War] as we know it.

However, it should be noted that I had another important task in mind for the Griffon and Hippogriffs. A task that the darkness dragons wouldn't be able to carry out.

"Anyway, I'll go try making two of them."

For the aerial combat unit that I was going to form, I wanted it to have at least 10 members but before that, I needed to accurately confirm their usefulness.

"[I Shall Compose]"

I said those words of power and the Demon Lord book appeared in my hand.

When I thought about the darkness dragon Graphross, the pages turned by themselves, only to stop at the corresponding page.

The needed DP for one was 1,200 DP, the standard price for a B rank monster.

By no means was it cheap but as I was at the moment, I could easily afford it.

I then recalled my wish to someday have a [Maelstrom]. Maelstroms could be bought for a hundred times the amount of a particular monster but in exchange, it produces that particular monster once each day. Given three

months and a few days, it would have recovered its initial cost and will continue to produce more monsters from then on, making the cost to performance ratio really great.

Basically, how many monsters a Demon Lord could steadily produce—[Maelstroms] or otherwise—determines how well off he is. For example, Marcho has tons of [Maelstroms] that can produce C rank monsters.

My plan was to amass DP to buy [Maelstroms] once my fighting force could be said to be sufficient for most situations. The kind of monsters I could buy at the moment were limited but even among them, my options were excellent, especially the B rank monsters which only I could buy.

“Now come, Darkness Dragon Graphross!”

I paid the required amount of DP and bought a Graphross.

Black particles gathered before me and assembled into the shape of a dragon.

It had four limbs, sharp claws and fangs, a long tail, and jet-black dragon wings that measured 4 meters long.

It was a dragon of darkness that had the Undead attribute.

Upon completion, with eyes filled with hostility, it looked down me, both literally and metaphorically.

“KYAAAAAAAON!”

It roared and the air shook.

Monsters are forbidden to harm their master as well as disobey that master's commands. However, anything in-between was totally allowed.

In other words, a monster with a wild temperament is tough to handle.

Such was surely the case for this one. It completely made light of me.

When I wondered what to do, a man in the prime of his life appeared. He was a demi-human that had a dragon's horns and tail. He was my trusted right-arm man. He was Wight.

"I was on my way to the bread factory but I sensed my lord's presence nearby. But then, here I find an extremely cheeky and unruly youngster. A youngster that must be disciplined. Taking such an attitude toward my lord, unacceptable."

"Ok, I'll leave his discipline to you, Wight."

Like that, he looked at the new dragon with cold eyes filled with silent anger.

Currently, Wight was a monster that had a rule over both Undead and dragons.

With him to take care of things, the disciplining of this *youngster* would probably be over in an instant.

And so, I smiled and silently watched.

Chapter 9: The Formation of the Aerial Combat Corps and Wight's Disciplining

In order to form the aerial combat corps, I bought a darkness dragon Graphross.

However, the one that I made had a rather unruly temperament and looked down on me.

“My lord, may I ask to be the one to discipline this youngster?”

When I was wondering how I should deal with the dragon, Wight unexpectedly passed by and then volunteered himself to rectify the darkness dragon.

Needless to say, I was grateful.

“You’re both dragons so you might understand each other better. In that case, sorry but please do take care of it.”

“Certainly, my lord. I will make this one know its place.”

Wight then directed his gaze to the darkness dragon. That made the dragon feel something, made it shift its gaze between me and Wight.

“Now then, what are you trying to pull off by showing such disrespect to the supreme being that is our lord?”

Wight was angry.

His facial expression and tone didn't change but the atmosphere around him certainly did.

His calm demeanor made him scarier.

"KYUWAA!"

The Graphross roared as if to say it was the superior one.

It was an intimidation, a show of force.

Or at least it would have if not for the complete lack of vigor behind it. The dragon was visibly afraid of the power it instinctively sensed from Wight. It probably intended to push on regardless but it could not hide that deep in its heart, it had accepted its defeat already and was just bluffing.

"Hush, brat."

Wight succinctly informed it so.

With just that, the Graphross took a few steps backward. With each step the Graphross took, Wight effortlessly took two to close in.

When Wight had closed in enough that he was almost face to face with the darkness dragon, it began to tremble.

"Now then, I suppose we'll begin with teaching you just whom you've challenged."

The next moment after Wight said that, overwhelming power swelled from within him.

Even I who was used to the girls' power levels was shocked by his display. Moreover, miasma that was death itself flowed out of him. He had released an

aura that would freeze any onlookers' soul.

With [Berserk] no longer being held back, Wight revealed his true form as a Siegwurm, the darker-than-black dragon of death. He was a size smaller than the Graphross but his power far exceeded the latter's.

He was the very embodiment of death; it felt like even the air surrounding him was dying.

At any rate, he locked on to the Graphross with his blood-red, malefic eyes.

In the next moment however, he placed a foreleg atop the newly born dragon's head. Yes, placed, without any real force—whether physical, magical or otherwise—behind the act. A simple pat in the head.

Normally, doing such a thing would produce nothing but...

"Kyuu, kyuu, Kyuuooon"

The darkness dragon turned itself over, made a pleading whimper, and showed its belly. It became fully submissive. It wasn't a proud dragon anymore, just a dog begging its master.

In the meantime, Wight reverted back to his demi-human form.

"My lord, its discipline is complete. This should be the very last instance this young one would be so rude towards you."

He said so and smiled at me.

"Thanks for taming it. I really appreciate it since the darkness dragons are going to be the backbone of the aerial combat unit which in turn will be used in

quite a few strategies.”

It wasn’t just to Wight, the Graphross became fully obedient to me as well. With that, I was able to count it among our forces.

“This is a rather good monster, my lord. Quite convenient.”

“I’m relieved that you, a strategist, say so.”

“It might have been unruly until a while ago but it is highly intelligent. More so than a human, I’d wager. Furthermore, while it is a dragon, it is also classified as an undead which means that it will benefit from my special ability.”

When Wight was reborn, one of the special abilities he gained was called [Ruler of Death] which had the effect of greatly strengthening undead monsters under Wight’s command.

“That sure is reassuring. With its high base stats and your special ability, it’ll probably be comparable to a low-tier A rank in most circumstances.”

Given that its race was a kind of dragon, it had high stats. Perhaps, among B rank monsters, they were one of the strongest.

Race: Darkness Dragon Graphross

B rank

Level: 58

Physical Strength: A

Endurance: A

Agility: A

Magic: B

Luck: B

Special: B

Skills:

Darkness Dragon

Miasma (Weak)

Deadly poison

Fear

Darkness Dragon: Able to use magic and breath attacks of the darkness attribute. Physical Strength and Endurance receive enhancements (small). Bonuses (medium) to the skill-holder's flying capabilities.

Miasma (Weak): Clads the user in miasma (weak) that adds damage to his attacks. Gives bonuses (medium) to Endurance as well as magical resistance.

Deadly poison: Clads claws and fangs with a deadly poison.

Fear: Grants weakening effect (medium) against all enemies lower than A rank.

Both its stats and special abilities were great. It was an extremely excellent monster.

And then, I had an idea. *Sometime later, we'll extract poison from these dragons. Poison that are gonna be used in weapons and some products.*

"Wight, I plan on creating nine more darkness dragons. I was thinking of

leaving the command of them to you but is that fine with you?"

"Of course, my lord. With 10 of this monster, we should be able to defeat most enemies with ease. My lord, how do you plan to make use of them?"

"First is to make them take over the aerial bombardment which until now is being done by the Griffon and Hippogriffs. Unlike them though, the darkness dragons will not require the elves to clear a path for them; they can gain air superiority on their own and can drop powerful bombs on the enemy army right from the start."

To be able to speedily bombard the enemies on the ground after eliminating the ones in the sky by themselves, that is their greatest strength.

"That's certainly true. If they use the napalm bombs right at the start of battle, our side would gain an overwhelming advantage. To be able to safely and reliably execute that is really reassuring."

"And that's not all. I'm also intending for these dragons to transport the Avalon-Ritters."

It could be said that this would be their more important job.

"I intend to make them carry a container filled with about 10 Avalon-Ritters and drop that container down on the enemy's base. I want this to be a new standard tactic of ours."

Upon hearing my words, Wight gasped. I took that as an indication that he fully understood me.

"As expected of my lord, to be able to think up of such an amazing thing. In essence, we would be able to rapidly send out large amounts of fighting force of

A-rank-equivalent units to any place at any time.That is revolutionary. We will be able to pretty much ignore the enemy's defenses and launch a surprise attack in the center of their formation."

The Avalon-Ritters were made of the light-weight metal orichalcum but due to their size, each one was heavy. Too heavy, in fact, that it was impossible for the Hippogriffs to transport many of them at a time.

Such was not the case for the Graphross, however.

If we could pull this off, the way wars were fought would most likely change; mobility would be the most important factor.

"Bombardment and transport, those will be darkness dragons' duties. I leave their command and training to you, Wight. Use as much real explosives as you see fit for the training. As for the transportation training, you may make use of any golems other than those made of mithril and transport them outside of Avalon in a container I would have the Dwarf Smiths make. For anything else necessary, you have my every permission."

"Yes, my lord. I will definitely present to you the strongest aerial combat corps."

Wight said so and very elegantly bowed.

Originally, I planned to be the one to do the training but since he was conveniently there, I entrusted it to him. More than that, since he could strengthen the darkness dragons, I had decided that it would be better for him to be their commander.

In reply to him I nodded to indicate my satisfaction. I then bought the other nine dragons with almost all of my remaining DP and entrusted all of them to Wight.

As a side note, one of the newly born dragons immediately protested to

which the very first one only looked at the latter with eyes filled with pity.

“I’ll leave the rest to you then.”

“Certainly, my lord.”

I left the place and headed toward Kohaku the Byakko.

Before I settled on any kind of defenses to prevent the leak of information or on what my intelligence-gathering monster is going to be, I first needed to know more about intelligence-gathering monsters themselves.

I was certain that in the middle of my talk with Byakko, I would be able to get some kind of insight.

Chapter 10: Professor Kohaku's Lecture on Spy Monsters

After I entrusted Wight with the darkness dragons, I went to Aura's orchard to talk with Kohaku on the topic of spy monsters.

Kohaku was a seasoned veteran so I thought there was a good chance he was well-informed about the topic.

After some walking, I finally reached where he was resting and that place was somewhere near the First Tree in the innermost part of the orchard.

There, I found Aura holding her hands over Kohaku while beads of sweat formed in her forehead.

In the meanwhile, Kohaku had his eyes closed. It was almost as though he was dreaming. Even though he was big, he still had that soothing cuteness peculiar to cats.

As I neared, he slowly opened his eyes.

"Oh, master. Welcome. I've already heard of your request."

Kohaku informed me so with a somewhat drowsy voice. It seemed Aura had properly relayed my message.

"That'll make things easier. But anyway, the reason I'm here today is to ask you about intelligence gathering."

"Hmm, I don't really mind but can it wait for a little bit? Aura's treatment feels so pleasant, it almost makes me want to sleep. Besides, stopping now will only mean doing it all over again. This girl won't look it and will just comply

without ever frowning but since I know how dedicated she is in healing me and how precise that process is, I just can't bring myself to ask her to do it all over again."

"I don't mind, really. We can't let master wait."

Aura seemed like she was about to stop her work.

"It's alright, Aura. Carry on with the treatment. Your top priority right now is to heal Kohaku. Delaying it will not do."

"Yes, certainly, master!"

Aura cheerfully nodded and returned to her work which was the continuous transfer of both magic power and vital energy to Kohaku. It was a process that was done to counteract the miasma that had gotten inside him.

After about five minutes like that, she slowly withdrew her hands.

"Kohaku-san, that concludes our session for today. We'll continue this tomorrow. Please don't forget to eat the golden apple."

"Even if you don't tell me to, those apples are so delicious, I'm still gonna. That said, I want some meat in my meal though. If I eat too much of the thieves and lessen their strength upon their resurrection, Wight surely won't let me hear the end of it. It's such a hassle."

Kakaka, Kohaku laughed.

It seemed like apple thieves still kept on coming despite the risks.

"You want some meat? Then, I guess as thanks for your valuable knowledge, I'll have some delivered to you later. Which do you prefer, raw or cooked

meat?"

"Hmm, I'll go with a thick slice done rare. Don't forget to season an ample amount of salt, now. That's simply the best."

I almost laughed at his human-like request. It was a little surprising that even though he's a tiger, he still preferred to have cooked meals.

"Understood. I'll have it brought to you later."

"Mm, I look forward to it. Well then, you wanted to know about intelligence gathering but I wonder where I should begin."

He then began to think. To advance the conversation, I decided to speak up.

"I would like to first know how an intruder has gone unnoticed by my monsters, monsters like Kuina and Aura who have good sensing capabilities."

Aura is capable of gathering information of everything within a radius of a few kilometers that has wind. Due to that, I had regularly asked her to confirm whether or not a dangerous being had gotten into our city. Even if they were humans, so long as they had strong magic power, they were to be reported.

In addition, I had also asked Kuina who was often with me to tell me if she ever felt a suspicious presence. To be able to effectively gather information, the other party would have needed to be somewhere near to me, the central point of information. However, should they ever cast their focus toward me, Kuina—whose presence sensing capabilities isn't anything to scoff at—would immediately notice.

"Hmm, very well. First of all, when talking about first class monsters, they're

able to completely prevent their magic power from leaking out. If there's no magic power leaking out, appearances aside, they will be indistinguishable from humans."

"I'm aware of that. But even if that's the case, if they are often near, either Kuina or Aura would surely have noticed that there are humans acting strangely. I've asked but the both of them said there was none."

All the more reason for me to be wary.

"Then, the answer is simple. There is a monster here that has an ability that lets him gather intelligence without even needing to be near."

Kohaku nonchalantly said it like that.

"You don't seem to have understood so I'll give you an example: there are monsters that can synchronize their consciousness with the birds and insects. I knew someone that can even sync with a flea. You, Aura, and Kuina, wouldn't go so far as to be vigilant against fleas, now would you? Anyway, a small amount of magic power leaks out when establishing a path to their target but once that's established, their magic power would be completely undetected from thereon."

".....I have overlooked that."

I had been wary only of humans and monsters that got near. I couldn't afford to pay attention to each and every insect that had no magic power flowing within them, after all.

"Additionally, there are also monsters with incredibly good hearing. These guys will be able to pick up any sound within a kilometer in the same dungeon

room. So if they conceal their magic power and themselves, they would go unnoticed. After all, they just strain their ears as they go on their daily routines to gain intelligence.”

“There are even monsters like that, huh.”

There was no way to recognize the enemy and its patterns since they would not behave suspiciously at all.

“There are still some more. There are monsters that can hide themselves in another dimension and from there, make a window which they can use to peep. In a sense these would be considered the strongest. With their ability, they can peep and listen in as much as they want from that other dimension. If their enemy didn’t have any dimension manipulation ability themselves, these monsters will not be discovered and that enemy is pretty much done for. Although, they do have their faults such as it is hard for them to make their peeping windows on a place that has a magic barrier around it.”

“...they’re the strongest kind, huh. Or rather, in terms of performing surprise attacks, theirs go way beyond fair, right?”

On places they could construct their peeping window, they could observe from any which one and appear from there as well if needed.

I knew of only one such monster: Marcho’s [Monster of the Covenant].

To make me realize my naivety before heading out to the Demon Lord Palace, she made her Covenant Monsters attack me.

During that, one monster suddenly appeared from my shadow. He looked and felt like a ninja but it might be better to say his ability fell under the classification of dimension manipulation.

“Have I been staring at the answer all along?”

I cursed inwardly. Marcho had definitely showed that monster’s ability to test me and yet, despite that, I only connected the dots this late. *So stupid*, I thought as I pitied myself.

There was a high chance, I thought, that the monster she used to spy on me was either that one or the ones two ranks under it that she became able to buy when she made the former.

“Thank you. You have been greatly helpful. I guess what I should do now is to erect a barrier not only at my residence but also at Rorono’s workshop. I’ll also ask Aura to periodically suck out all the air in the important places so that all living creatures trapped in there will be killed. Additionally, I’ll prohibit everyone from speaking about sensitive information except when they’re in a completely soundproof room. That’ll be enough for now, I guess.”

“Hmm, that’s a really pragmatic response. However, that will only deal with the monsters I’ve mentioned. Moreover, if the barriers are too weak or if the enemy is too strong, they can just brute force the barrier and bring it down.”

“For the first point, we can only do so much but we must do it nonetheless. For your latter point, it doesn’t really matter since if brute force was indeed used, we would know that there is something strange going on and be alerted to the presence of a monster that has a dimension manipulation ability.”

Kohaku nodded as though he was satisfied with my answer, much like a teacher would at his student.

“Ah, you really are smart. Really worthy of my service.”

“I’m happy that you say that. And, I’ll be relying on you more from now on, Kohaku.”

“Yeah, I’m almost fully recovered too.”

"Good, that's encouraging. Can I ask a question though? Have you ever thought of wanting to return by your former master's side? Your master before [Steel], I mean."

"I most certainly have. I have thought of my beloved former master, my important comrades, and my subordinates who look up to me."

Kohaku nonchalantly said so.

"My former master has deemed it necessary that I be the one to be sent to test you. In the moment he gave me that order, I guess he had already predicted my defeat and death. No, he might have even foresaw that I would come to serve you. ...that is perfectly plausible for him. But if that is so, being here and serving you, I can't consider it other than my destiny."

He really had faith for his former master. For that reason, I had come to a decision.

"As we agreed upon, I will not ask you to tell me anything about your former master but if by chance I run into him and we come into a negotiation, I intend to trade you back, for favorable terms, of course."

"That, wouldn't that be unnecessary?"

"I think that it is necessary for I can see that your heart yearns for your former master. And if that really is so, I think it would be for your best interest that you be with him. I would lose you but as I said, it won't be for charity; I intend to get as much as is taken."

"Kakaka, you really are interesting. I might someday truly, from the bottom of my heart, admire you as my master. If that happens, I'll ask that those negotiations be stopped."

"Oh please do. If your heart truly belongs to me, I will absolutely never let you go. I value you not only for your abilities and knowledge but also for your

character."

Kohaku and I both laughed.

With that, my task there was complete.

"Kohaku, Aura, I have decided that for the next monster to be made with [Creation], it will one with the ability to manipulate dimensions."

"That's great! After all, even I can't deal with enemies that are in another dimension."

Aura commented so.

Under the assumption that monster that can manipulate dimensions can only be dealt with one that can do the same, we were truly in deadly situation. It was though an unseen dagger was being pressed against our throats.

With that decided, all that was left was to figure out how to make that monster.

What medals should I use, I wondered. ...don't I have one closely related to other dimensions and is considered to be one of the strongest medals, I then suddenly thought. The identity of that medal was...

"I'll be going now. Thank you, Kohaku, Aura."

In order to not forget the thoughts in my head as well as to examine them further, I headed back home.

And so, I looked forward to monster that I was going to make next.

That then reminded me of the only [Creation] medal I traded away. *I wonder*

how it was used, I thought.

The one I traded it to was the [Time] Demon Lord Dantalian, one of the strongest Demon Lords still alive.

I then wondered just how strong a monster could be when my [Creation] medal was used to its fullest potential by him.

That being said, it was still only one medal. Whereas I had four S rank monsters beginning with Kuina. *I have nothing to fear*, I thought.

Chapter 11: Commercial Revolution

Ten days had passed after I talked with Kohaku.

During that interval, we had erected a barrier around my house and Rorono's workshop.

Constructing arrays for such barrier was a specialty of Aura. Unlike an obstruction that would vanish instantly, this barrier needed to last indefinitely. Because of that though, its performance were several levels lower.

If an A rank monster were to break this barrier, he would most likely succeed. However, just the fact that we could be alerted to the presence of a being capable of breaking it alone was more than enough.

Furthermore, the materials of the buildings were changed to ones that had the highest soundproofing. These new materials were developed by Rorono, of course.

For the meantime, such was our counter-intelligence measures.

I had also prohibited any conversation regarding important matters outside of my residence and Rorono's workshop.

By the way, I didn't bother to conceal the aerial combat corps because there was no real way to completely hide them anyway. Besides, they had to be trained to be of actual use.

"We've somehow finished setting up the barriers as well as reconstructing the buildings."

"Yes, we did great!"

"The Dwarf Smiths have also grown a fair bit."

I looked at Aura and Rorono who both did improvements to my residence and gave them a satisfied nod. Aura built the barriers herself. As for Rorono, she had developed the materials that were used for the soundproofing but entrusted the rest to the Dwarf Smiths, only to come by occasionally to check up and give further instructions to the apprentices.

To Rorono, her most important job at the moment was the mass production of the Avalon-Ritters and that therefore took priority above all others.

For the moment though, that goal was still quite far away off from realization. It seemed that establishing a stable synchronization between the two cores involved was causing her difficulties. Nevertheless, it seemed like her progress on her continued research had lowered the bar enough for her to be able make a total of three Avalon-Ritters. To have been able to make three A-rank-equivalent units alone was worthy of praise.

"I'm really grateful to the two of you. Thank you. With this, we have made gathering information from us much harder to do."

What we did was but the bare minimum in terms of counter-intelligence and was far from perfect.

To solve it completely, we needed a monster specialized in intelligence-gathering and to have that, I needed a [Creation] medal.

Unfortunately, I wouldn't be able to produce another [Creation] medal until a few days later. As soon as I could though, I plan on making the new monster.

"I'm glad to be of help to master."

"Me too. If there's anything else you need me to do, please don't hesitate to ask."

Rorono and Aura proudly said so.

“Here are your rewards.”

By using my [Creation] ability, I made sweets that were still not common to this world—if they ever existed at all—and handed it to the two. I also handed to Rorono the Dwarf Smith’s shares.

“Woaaaahhh, a cake roll with lots of fluffy cream. It’s also full of fruits I haven’t seen before.”

“The Dwarf Smiths will be delighted. Thank you, master.”

It isn’t often that I gave them special rewards that could only be made through [Creation] so the two were greatly pleased.

But then, I suddenly felt as though someone was looking at us. I looked but saw nothing... or so I had thought until I noticed a tail—and nothing more—sticking out of the wall. It was a lovely and fluffy fox tail. It was definitely Kuina’s.

She’s probably curious about us, I thought. I then remembered that she was troubled before over the fact that she wasn’t able to contribute much outside of combat. Taking that and the current scene, I worried she might feel some kind of complex and decided that I should follow up on her sometime later.

“Now, let’s all go back to our jobs, okay?”

“Understood, master. Let’s give it our all.”

“Mhm. I’m going to try my hardest to be able to present to you the mass-

produced Avalon-Ritters."

The two nodded and then left.

The counter-intelligence measures weren't the only ones we were able to accomplish within the last ten days:

Aura had finally cured Kohaku completely.

The darkness dragons' training, conducted by Wight, was going well.

Kuina had been leveling up the new Mythological Foxes, Dwarf Smiths, and High Elves.

Rorono's research still wasn't complete yet but her goal was now a few steps nearer.

I mustn't lose to my subordinates, I thought as I began my work as their leader.



Today, I was scheduled to meet with a top executive of a company.

For them to expressly ask for a meeting itself was a big issue.

I have to brace myself, I thought as I did my office work. And then, a visitor arrived.

One of the Mythological Foxes assigned to be a maid in my home had guided a gentleman of good build.

Even among the companies that did business in our city, his was among the most prominent. He was Relic, the representative of the Relic Company.

I have to brace myself, I reminded myself again.

"Procell-san, sorry for expressly asking you to make time for me today."

"No, don't mind it. Knowing Relic-san, it's most probably a matter that needs urgent attention. Even I would like to have more information as soon as possible."

Nobody knew the importance of time better than a merchant. They understood and valued it. So for him to ask for this meeting, there was no way I could have refused.

"I'm relieved to hear you say so. The reason I imposed on you this time is because of the neighboring city. Frankly, they have been harassing us merchants who are going to Avalon."

I see, so they decided to be roundabout, I thought as I grimaced.

As of the moment, Avalon couldn't in any way stand on its own. Merchants buy a considerable amount of goods from the neighboring city and sell it here. If the taxes imposed on them were to increase, so too did the cost they had to shoulder and if their profits became so small they almost didn't profit at all, they would withdraw from Avalon. If that happens, the standard of living here in Avalon would decrease all at once.

"We merchants are obligated to pay tariffs and admission fees whenever we go into a city. And when we exit, we are only inspected to see if we have any goods that are prohibited from being exported among our stocks. If we are cleared, we are allowed to exit without paying for any kind of tax. That is the standard affair."

The tax system differed depending on the city but as for the neighboring city, only the tariff on the incoming goods and the admission tax for entering the city were the only two fees.

Of course, living there would also incur other taxes but for merchants who

didn't have any store, those were the only two fees that they needed to be concerned with.

"But now, they've also imposed a fee whenever you're exiting the city, am I right?"

"Exactly. Our carriages that are heading out to Avalon are being asked to pay a fee equal to that of the tariff we pay when entering a city. That effectively doubles the tariff we have to pay."

"That's not good."

"Yes, it isn't. Thankfully, there's no tariff in Avalon so that somehow offsets it but we as merchants can't help but feel a decrease in our enthusiasm. We are still in the black at the moment—albeit just barely—but that will not always be the case. And so, I ask that something be done about it as soon as possible."

Such was the harassment of the neighboring city.

I was still continuing to stall for time regarding their offer of being under their rule. They kept sending several letters demanding my decision but instead, I only answered that I needed more time. However, this event would indicate that I was starting to run out of time that I could buy.

"Can you use another exit out of that city and then use an alternative route to go to Avalon? If I lend you some strong golems to pull your carriages, poor roads shouldn't be an issue."

"If it's only a matter of whether we can or can't, we can. However, our companies are based on that city. If we were by chance found out to be evading tax, it will bring ruin to us. So although we physically can, we'd rather not."

"I see your point."

He replied as I expected.

Now, how do I proceed, I asked myself. If I didn't do anything, the merchants would lose faith in me. My deteriorating relationship with the neighboring city was already exposed to them. In fact, there were many of them that were already considering of pulling out of Avalon.

Immediately making up with the other city and stopping these harassments were the ideal solutions but such were not possible. Now, being the merchants that they are, they should have thought that such speedy resolutions were impossible as well. If so, their goal then would probably be to recover some of their losses.

"I understand that this discord with the neighboring city is my fault so I shall deal with it."

"That's reassuring but how exactly are you going to deal with it?"

Merchants were very perceptive about the flow of money so they should have an idea of the amount of tax being collected in Avalon. Given that, they knew I had money and hence this meeting.

Besides, there were many reasons why they remained even though they could have left without any notice.

One such reason was that Avalon still remained a lucrative market.

The customers here were generous, the taxes cheap, the security great.

Since they were still gaining profits, they were reluctant on leaving.

So, if they could make me give as much money as the profits they've lost, they would be perfectly happy to conduct business as normal.

"Avalon will compensate for these unwarranted taxes... is what I would have liked to say but that will not really help with anything; it would be like putting out a large fire with a glass of water. So instead, I'm proposing a means to

procure products from other cities without ever stopping at that one.”

“It would be great if we could but that city is the southernmost city of the empire; we can’t get to the other cities without going through that one. The mountain paths also have checkpoints in them, after all.”

“That’s if we’re only talking about land routes.”

“Yes but you can’t be suggesting we make use of water routes, can you? For one, there aren’t any.”

“You’re not thinking grandly enough, high enough. What I’m proposing is what if you can transport your goods using the sky which belongs to no one?”

Compensating them with same amount of additional tariff would only cause an increase in the tax collected.

Why do that when there was a better, more direct way to tackle the issue.

On the other hand, a more direct method might anger the merchants.

To begin with, I was of the thought that we were going to war with the neighboring city anyway so we shouldn’t rely on them anymore. In whatever case though, our economy needed to be independent.

To that end, I proposed the use of the sky to transport goods collected from all other places without ever going through the neighboring city.

Upon hearing me, the merchant was wide-eyed, slack-jawed, and desperately shaking his head.

“The sky? Is such a thing possible? But if ever it is...”

The delivery of goods through the air is, in a sense, the apex of all deliveries.

In this age, each time a caravan passes through a town or checkpoint, taxes

are imposed on the goods. By the time the goods reach its intended market, their prices would have skyrocketed.

One of the major reasons port cities were so prosperous was that most goods that come into their city arrived by way of the sea and had therefore less chances of taxes being imposed on the goods compared to deliveries via land routes.

However, through air travel, merchants would be able to procure their goods directly from the source thus making their prices cheap. It was superior to sea transport. After all, one could easily procure goods even from cities and villages that didn't have any body of water near them. It also had the advantage of taking the shortest route to the source of the goods without minding the terrain.

Its disadvantage however was that against sea transport where buoyancy played a part, one couldn't transport as much volume as before.

"Procell-san, if such a thing truly is possible, it would bring about a revolution. ...it will be more valuable than a ton of gold. The goods that until now we had to give up on getting due to the cost not being worth it, or the ones whose freshness we couldn't maintain... if what you say is possible, tens, hundreds of deals like that will be completed easily."

"I assure you that here in Avalon, it is entirely possible to use the sky to travel. I'm aware that some of you merchants already know about Avalon's deteriorating relationship with the neighboring city and that some of you are thinking of leaving this place. I have no intentions of holding any of you back."

The merchant gasped.

I had no time for half-measures; I wanted a plan for when our relationship with the neighboring city turns into a hostile one.

"But I did prepare this to make your stay here—even at the cost of leaving the other city—worthwhile. I don't expect you to take my word for it though so I'll just demonstrate it for you. I'll need time to prepare it but in the afternoon of two days later, it will be ready. Please spread the word to as many merchants as you can. You guys are fortunate. Fortunate to be the very first merchants in the world to have conquered the skies."

He gasped once again.

"The first merchants in the world... to conquer the skies... that sounds marvelous."

"Yes, it does. And as you know, pioneers of any kind tend to gain the greatest profits."

"That's certainly true. Very well then, Procell-san, I look forward to your demonstration two days later."

It seemed like the Hippogriffs' turn had come sooner than I had originally expected. Although they failed to satisfy the new requirement of transporting ten orichalcum golems to be part of our air force, they were more than strong enough for the merchants.

If combined with the implement made by Rorono, they should be able to transport via the sky half the amount a regular carriage could.

And so, I began to ready them to work the work that the Darkness Dragons wouldn't be able to do.

Chapter 12: Hippogriffs of the Azure Sky

Two days after I had met with Relic, the representatives of all the companies that had opened business here in Avalon had gathered in a meeting room within my residence.

The masters of these companies were normally not around and entrusted the operation of their businesses to their subordinates but for this meeting, even they were present.

The appeal of using the sky to travel was so great that I thought it wouldn't have been surprising if these merchants hurried here using the fastest horses they had as soon as they heard about my proposal.

I could sympathize with them though since aside from not being overly burdened with taxes, they would have access to the fastest mode of transportation and thus gain as much profit as possible.

Even its downside which was the less volume per trip could be worked around so long as one transported light but highly valuable goods such as spices—which were considered valuable in this world—and jewelry.

When it neared the expected time and I saw that the number of people gathered neared the expected amount, I decided to begin and stood up.

"Hello everyone. I have explained it before to the master of the Relic company but let me do so again: the delivery of goods through the sky is now made possible here in our city of Avalon. I would like to provide this service to all that had contributed greatly to Avalon. By that I mean only to those that have opened a store here in Avalon."

Their eyes all gathered on me. These were all influential people who managed their own companies and as to be expected of their stares, it held quite the force. It would be an exaggeration to say theirs wouldn't lose out to any lower noble's stare.

"I wouldn't dare to waste anyone's time so let me demonstrate to you all how exactly you are going to conquer the skies. Please follow me."

The merchants agreed and followed me somewhere outside of Avalon.



The place I guided the merchants to was an open field that wasn't a part of my dungeon anymore. Over there, we found some Dwarf Smiths and the Hippogriffs they were taking care of.

A Hippogriff was a monster that had the body of a horse—only a size larger—and a head that seemed like an eagle's.

Seeing those monsters, the merchants were frozen in place.

I then wondered how worse their reactions could have gotten if these were perhaps the Darkness Dragons. Considering that the dragons' special ability, Fear, was constantly being released, I had guessed that there were two likely outcomes: if we're lucky, the merchants would simply faint; if we're not, their mental health would be severely affected.

"Please be at ease, everyone. These are all very well trained creatures. If you weren't aware, Avalon is a city where demi-humans persecuted everywhere else have come to gather. Among those children, one girl was from a village where the training of these Hippogriffs was popular. And so, I present to you the Hippogriffs expertly tamed and trained by that girl. Aside from being obedient, these creatures are capable of understanding human speech. I assure you they are far easier and safer to use than horses."

Upon hearing me, the merchants hesitantly approached the Hippogriffs.

And then, one of them dared to pat one of the creatures in the head. The said Hippogriff then reacted by narrowing its eyes and raising a voice that suggested that it was pleased.

The merchants that saw that then one after the other patted the Hippogriffs and smiled.

It seemed like they had accustomed themselves sooner than I had initially predicted.

Other than the Hippogriffs, we had also prepared what would appear like carriages but with no tires and that had some kind of implement attached to it.

That was a smaller version of what was to be used for the transportation of the Avalon-Ritters.

“Now then, everyone, you might have already guessed it but the means of transport that I am proposing is going to be achieved by letting these guys fly and pull these cargo carriers. It’s as simple as that.”

One of the merchants raised his hand and requested permission to ask a question.

I urged him to go on and then listened to him.

“How much is its maximum carry load?”

“Those cargo carriers can hold up to 500 Kg.”

Considering horse-drawn carriages could carry a thousand kilograms, the 500Kg load capacity was small. To compensate for that, however, was the

Hippogriffs and their ability to fly.

“Do those monsters have enough strength to carry that?”

“Yes, they are monsters, after all, so despite what their appearance might suggest, they are incredibly strong. No horse could ever hope to compete with them.”

That said, I myself was a little dissatisfied with them. To be a part of the aerial combat corps, they needed to be able to transport 10 Avalon-Ritters at a high speed. If they could only carry 500 kilograms, that would mean they could only carry up to two Avalon-Ritters at a time whereas the Darkness Dragons could carry ten and were still faster.

“How fast are they?”

“Under no load, they could fly somewhere around 300 kilometers in one hour. If under full load, somewhere around 200 kilometers in an hour. It can go on flying without rest for two hours and if a half-hour break is taken afterwards, it can do three two-hour trips. However, if you do try to maximize and make three two-hour trips, please let it rest for six hours afterwards.”

The merchants were so astonished, they left their mouths hang open.

It was a perfectly natural response though considering that horses were far slower. Even on a well-paved road, they would still take an hour to cover 15 kilometers. On a poorly-paved road, they would be lucky to cover 10 kilometers. To add further insult to injury, if they were to gallop for an hour, they would have to take a rest after that. The most it could travel in a day was somewhere around 50 kilometers.

But when compared to the Darkness Dragons, the Hippogriffs were the far slower ones: the dragons, while carrying 10 Avalon-Ritters, could travel at the speed of sound.

"Their maximum load capacity may be half of a horse-drawn carriage but to make up for it, these guys, under full load, can cover in an hour the distance that would take the horses four days to traverse. Or, put in a grander scale, they will be able to fly through a month's worth of distance in a day's time. Moreover, since they are using the sky, they follow shortest and most direct path possible which makes them all the more efficient. Up there, there's no need to worry about obstacles, poorly paved roads, or even bandits."

Upon hearing the details, they wracked their brains with their calculations. For all I know, they could have thought of more advantages to the Hippogriffs that even I failed to imagine.

"What?"

"That's... amazing"

"Hiring adventurers to guard the horse-drawn carriages, taking days... these will soon be things of the past."

"I definitely want it! Oh, all the profit I can get!"

The eyes of all the merchants changed hue to reflect their fascination with the Hippogriffs.

And then, one of them spoke out.

"I have no complaints with all of those specifications, I'm happy even, but are they truly and completely safe? That is the only thing that concerns me. In the first place, how can I make it listen to what I say?"

"That is a very valid concern. Then, why don't we actually procure a product? Is there anybody here who was planning to procure something from a place within four days' worth of travelling? Together with me, we can get to that

place within an hour if we use the Hippogriff.”

As to be expected, there was no one readily accepting of something that was quite unknown.

When I worried that I might have pushed too hard, one of the merchants raised his hand. He was Relic, the representative of the Relic Company whom I met with two days prior.

Of course it's him, I thought. He was special even among the merchants. He was both decisive and courageous. He was also one of the very first ones to operate in Avalon as well as one of the highest grossing ones.

“Then, I’ll go. I was thinking of wanting to be the very first one to experience this anyway. I’ve got just the right place too. In the mountains, there lies a village that grows the cows that give the highest quality beef. But since it’s in the mountains and doesn’t have any great roads that lead to it, buying the meat is troublesome, to say the least. Via the sky, however, things should get far easier.”

“Understood. Let’s go there, then.”

And so, I had the merchant Relic seated into a Hippogriff. The harness he used was something that was made by the Dwarf Smiths. Their craftsmanship might be inferior to an Elder Dwarf but their works were still far superior to any human’s work.

Metal snap hooks were also attached to prevent the rider from falling in the case he let go of his grip.

“To everyone staying behind, these girls will be discussing how to ride the Hippogriffs so please do give them your attention. If you have any questions or concerns, please don’t hesitate to ask them. Once the discussion is over, feel free to head back. I’m sure Relic-san will relay to you all his impressions on

using the Hippogriffs as soon as he returns so please look forward to that.”

The other merchants nodded and began to ask the Dwarf Smiths various questions.

I then turned toward Relic.

“Hoh, this feels quite pleasant to ride.”

“I’ll now attach the load carrier to the Hippogriff.”

Upon saying so, I connected the snap hooks from the Hippogriff’s harness to the carrier. After it made a clinking sound, it was done.

“Well then, let’s go.”

I then seated myself behind the merchant.

“How do I control it?”

“Your words will do. So long as the instructions are simple, they will understand and follow it. Firstly, please instruct it to fly.”

“A-alright. Fly.”

The Hippogriff issued a chirping sound and began to dash for a very short while to gain momentum and then jumped up. Its short dash pulled the cords attached to the carrier and, as it flew, so too did the carrier.

Hippogriffs were not creatures that flew through the use of wings. Rather, they flew through the use of magic power. That meant that wind was not as big as a factor to them.

Also, through special magic-power-conducting cords, magic ran through the carrier as well, causing them to be suspended in the air.

Like that, our air trip began.

"This... this is amazing! Haha! The wind feels good. The scenery looks great. Ahh. So this is the sky!"

The merchant was ecstatic and seemed to be enjoying our air trip.

The Hippogriff's ability pushed aside the incoming wind so we didn't feel any coldness or strong wind pressure up there. It was an extremely comfortable ride.

That said, it was the merchant's first time at a very high altitude so I thought he was going to be a little frightened.

I then waved my hand to the back.

The air shook as Aura flew and followed us using her wind magic. She also carried her anti-materiel rifle on her back.

Once again, the air shook but this time, it was for her to vanish from sight. She did so via her magic that allowed her to bend the visible light in her surroundings.

It was very rare for Demon Lords to send out their important fighting force outside of their dungeons. It was also extremely unlikely to be attacked up in the sky except under very special circumstances. At the moment though, I and my city were being targeted. So, just to be sure, I had Aura stealthily follow us to act as our guard.

"Relic-san, I don't know where our destination is so please instruct the Hippogriff about it. The basic commands you might want to say is for it to: gain

or lose altitude; veer to the right or left; speed up or down; and land. This child will still understand what you say so please don't hesitate issue it commands, even if they aren't one of those I've mentioned."

"What!? It's so easy to use then. This is the most enjoyable ride I have ever had. I don't think I can travel by horse ever again."

Still ecstatic, Relic instructed the Hippogriff. In return, it gave a clear response to his words and changed directions. Bemused by that, Relic kept giving it various commands to which the Hippogriff honestly responded to.

And so, we reached the village in the mountains—which would have taken horses four days to travel—in less than hour.

Relic then quickly traded with the villagers. He bought a cow; paid an additional fee for a quicker service; and loaded it along with dairy products into a cart he requested from the villagers.

"Hahaha! The shipping expenses used to always be many times higher than the cows themselves! I had to pay for the regular salaries as well as the hazard pay of the coachmen and the guards for a roundtrip journey of ten days! All that however won't be need anymore! To be able to buy the highest quality beef for this low total price, it's a miracle! Once we return, let my shop treat you to some of these for a price I'm sure you'll like. Ahh, what else should I use this miraculous transportation method on? Which should I buy? The jewels in the islands on other side of the sea? The spices in the south? Or maybe other specialty products from faraway lands that have too many checkpoints between here and there. My dreams have expanded!"

He truly was in a good mood as he watched the goods being loaded into the carrier.

If he was that ecstatic, I was sure his explanation to the other merchants

about the charms of this method would be enthusiastic as well.

Once the loading was finished, we made our way back. Without even taking a total of three hours, we were able to return to Avalon with the carrier full of the highest quality beef.

As soon as we returned, the merchants flooded toward us.

It seemed like they were surprised that we returned in such a short time. Apparently, that village was well-known among the merchants, so it would seem our record-breaking travel time conveyed just how amazing the Hippogriffs were.

Relic then talked to the other merchants and his excitement spread to them as well. When I noticed it, all the merchants before were there. When he finished talking, I took it as a good chance to give some good last push.

"As you can see, the Hippogriffs have displayed immense potential in increasing the flow of goods. Currently, there are twenty Hippogriffs here in Avalon and that number is expected to increase in the future. The only requirement we seek is that you operate a shop here and that shop's sales have surpassed a certain amount. We will be lending only one out to each company on a first come, first served basis."

I then informed them of the specific amount. Generally, the stores here could easily exceed that amount and thus clear my requirement but for stores that were more of a hobby, it might not be so easy.

This prevented fake stores from making use of the Hippogriffs.

"Also, the longest time you can rent a Hippogriff will be for four days. After

four days have passed, wherever it may be, the Hippogriff will return to Avalon on its own so any attempts to steal it will be useless. No time extension will be given. The next reservation shall be the one prioritized so to use the service again, please queue up once more.”

The merchants were allowed to do use the Hippogriffs in any transaction, even those that didn’t involve Avalon, but only for a set amount of time. Even though the service is limited, they should still be able to gain more than enough profits.

It was important to force these merchants to periodically return to Avalon. After all, no merchant was stupid enough to return here with an empty load. That meant that upon their return, they would also bring back goods they were going to sell in Avalon.

And since I was basically requiring them to sell the products they returned with, those products they procured from all over the world would gather in Avalon.

Moreover, since our city’s tariffs were so low it might as well have been free, it would drive the cost of their products to go lower than any other place.

In summary, Avalon would become the best city in the world filled with the most number of fascinating products from all over the world that are offered at very cheap prices.

If all went well, the city’s population would grow many times over.

Such was my true purpose on introducing air travel via the Hippogriffs. ...that being said, there was still a lot to do before that is realized.

“Additionally, in the event you lose the carrier, you will be banned from using the Hippogriffs for a year. A fine of an amount depending on the severity of your fault will also be pressed on you.”

To increase the load the Hippogriffs could carry even if only a little, the carriers were made of ultra-lightweight carbon developed by Rorono.

Even if it was purely a carrier and nothing more, it was still highly valuable. Unless I made it clear now, some would probably try to sell it elsewhere.

"And so, that concludes today's introduction to the Hippogriffs. From tomorrow onwards, we will begin lending out the Hippogriffs so, to all whose earnings for last month have already exceeded our required amount, please do give them a try. To those that didn't clear our requirement, note that this appraisal will be done each month so do aim to improve your sales to be able to make use of this service next month. Well then, if you'll excuse me."

After that speech, I left the place.

All that was left was to see what course of action the merchants were going to take. At the very least, I thought it unlikely that they were going to pull out of Avalon for the moment.

Nevertheless, the neighboring city's harassments had begun.

The day that they completely get tired of waiting on us would soon come, I suspected.

Once I complete my needed pieces though, we're rock solid.

"Finally, only three more days."

After three more days, I would have obtained the final piece I needed: a [Creation] medal.

Or more precisely, a spy monster made using my [Creation] medal.

I had made Kuina with Fire, Rorono with Earth, and Aura with Wind. For the next monster, I would have completed the Four Great Elements by making a monster using the Water medal.

"I'm so excited for it. Though I just hope the next monster would be a good kid like Kuina and the others."

I smiled as I made my way back.

Chapter 13: The Last of the Four Great Elements

“The final notice, huh.”

As I ate breakfast, I read the letter that was sent early in the morning by the neighboring city’s lord. I couldn’t help but smile wryly at its content.

“Oto-san, what’s wrong?”

Kuina the Celestial Fox tilted her head and asked me that question. There were some mayonnaise at the corner of mouth as she did so and it was so cute.

Aura took a liking to the handmade mayonnaise I prepared back then to kill some time and had since become a staple on our dining table.

I don’t even know why I made the mayonnaise but it felt as though the world itself was compelling me to do so.

“Before that, Kuina, you have some mayonnaise on the corner of your mouth.”

“Oto-san, wipe it off.”

She then purposely stood up and walked over to me while merrily shaking her fox tail.

Even though it would have been much faster if she did it herself, I thought as I smiled a little.

“There.”

“Thanks, Oto-san”

When I wiped the mayonnaise off of her with my hand and then licked it, Kuina smiled.

“Buu.”

When I turned my eyes to the front, I caught sight of Rorono. I then noticed the thick patch of mayonnaise on her mouth and her unmoving gaze on me.

Yeah, I know what she's up to.

To tell the truth, the most spoiled kid wasn't Kuina but rather Rorono.

Add in that she was too shy to say anything and it was just too cute.

Nonetheless, it had to be done, I thought, as I decided to wipe the patch of mayonnaise. Before I could though...

“Rorono-chan, that's poor manners.”

The blond and stylish Aura hugged Rorono from behind and then wiped off the mayonnaise with a piece of cloth.

At that, Rorono made a complicated face. When I looked at Aura's facial expression, I was confident that was her desired result. She occasionally did this sort of mischievous things to enjoy the various faces Rorono made in response.

“Rorono, there's still some left.”

“Mhm, thanks, master.”

I wiped off the mayonnaise that Aura left unwiped. I believed she did so on purpose to see both Rorono's disappointed and delighted faces and thus have twice the fun.

As for Rorono, her cheeks slightly reddened as she gave a pleased nod.

With that carefree atmosphere, we continued with our breakfast. Demon Lords and monsters needed only to feed on the mana in the air and on the emotions of humans. We don't eat food but it provided us comfort and nourishment to the mind.

In a sense, not being troubled with the provisions is a strength of ours.

"Let's go back to our previous topic. If you remember, some time ago, soldiers came to Avalon. According to the letter, to make sure we fall in line quickly, their leader is sending out another group of soldiers. If we seem like we're stalling for more time, those soldiers will demonstrate force."

Today's toast was delicious and the cheese on top of it was great as well. Further on top of that were the pieces of tomato that, up until recently, couldn't at all be gotten fresh here in Avalon and they went really great with the cheese.

After the introduction of air transportation, more and more cheap and delicious products had begun to show up here in Avalon.

We were already popular with the adventurers before but now, even non-adventurers were beginning to flock to our city to buy and eat rare and great goods at a cheap price.

As the number of people increase, so too did the DP I earned. And as the quality of life increases, so too did quality of each individual's emotions.

I, a Demon Lord who fed on human emotions, felt so full of power.

"Do those humans want to challenge Oto-san and die? Or rather be killed by Kuina?"

"It won't be long until they run out of patience; just a bit more and we can show them their place."

"Now, now, Kuina-chan, Rorono-chan, negligence is the greatest enemy. Their foolish heads have thought up various things and some of those just might bring us down if we're not careful."

Aura reprimanded both Kuina and Rorono.

I smiled a little as I thought that my monsters, as ever, regarded the humans as the inferior beings, mocking them, even. Although given that they were monsters and overwhelmingly strong S rank monsters at that, such couldn't be helped, I thought.

In truth, Avalon is often visited by first-class adventurers who are barely as powerful as B rank monsters and so we had an idea of just how strong humans could be. And if we're talking about these three girls, it wouldn't even take them 3 seconds to kill one.

Given that, it was understandable they were overconfident a bit.

"It's as Aura says. Yes, humans are definitely weak but they have numbers and various tools at their disposal. More than those, they have wisdom. All those compensate for their lack of power. Besides, they also have heroes who seem to be outside the norm. So, don't let your guard down, okay?"

Even though they were called heroes, they were only as strong as A rank monsters. Still, it wouldn't be so strange for there to be heroes much stronger than an A rank monster so we couldn't let our guards down regardless.

“Understood!”

“If you say so, master.”

The two said so as they nodded.

“Moreover, while the humans truly are foolish and weak, they aren’t trash. These delicious cheese and tomato, the alcohol, the songs, the dances, the stories, all of these are made and developed by mankind. Things that we Demon Lords and monsters wouldn’t even bother to think of making. Think of humans as sweet little creatures that entertain us. Avalon isn’t just a farm where we can harvest human emotions; it’s a city where in exchange for giving them safety and peace of mind, they provide us with culture and entertainment. In a sense, they stand equal to us here. So, don’t look down on them too much, alright?”

Kuina and Rorono looked down on the breakfast before them and nodded. I was happy to make them realize that although humans were weak, they were also useful.

“Master, what are you planning to do about that letter from the nearby city?”

“Of course, I’m going to refuse their demand, Aura. Although I am still going to negotiate with them one last time and give them my adjusted set of conditions. It would probably end up in war nonetheless though.”

“Oto-san, Kuina will do her very best!”

“For their crime of shaming master, I will make them pay with their lives.”

When the soldiers came before, I debased myself in order earn some time. I would say that it was worth it for I had increased my fighting force significantly from then:

The Darkness Dragons and their skills which had risen enough to get Wight's seal of approval; the much greater number of napalm bombs made out of materials that we could only procure through my [Creation]; and...

"How is the development of the Avalon-Ritters?"

"It's still impossible to use whichever pair of golem cores but the restrictions are now much more lax. Of the golem cores made so far, 12 pairs have been found to be compatible. So, including the very first one and the three made after that, there are now a total of 16 Avalon-Ritters produced. I estimate that from now on, as much as 7 Avalon-Ritters can be produced in a month."

Yes, the last one was the success of the mass production of the Avalon-Ritters.

My initial estimate of producing 15 Avalon-Ritters a month was found to be impossible but nevertheless, having 7 A rank equivalent units per month is phenomenal.

For other Demon Lords, an A rank was enough to be regarded as a trump card. After all, the odds of getting an A rank monster from the synthesis of two A rank medals were less than 70%. Additionally, the number of Demon Lords whose personal medals were of A rank were just around ten percent of the population. That meant that to use two A rank medals in synthesis and thus to potentially create a single A rank monster, most Demon Lords would have to wait for two months.

Even the old Demon Lords could only make hundreds of A rank monsters in their lifetime.

And then, there was me who was able to create seven in one month. It was clearly cheating.

"Rorono, thanks to your efforts, I can be firm in the negotiations. You've really worked hard, thank you."

"Mhm. It's because I promised to do better so that master never has to lower his head to those humans again. I will absolutely uphold that promise."

The Avalon-Ritters were going to be our main force in the upcoming fight and with 16 of them already made, they were more than enough.

I then hugged Rorono tightly. As for her, she triumphantly smiled and hugged me in return.

"Uuuu, Rorono-chan's so sneaky. Kuina's envious but Rorono-chan's done something amazing so I can't really complain."

"Now, now, Kuina-chan, let's just do what we can; if it's something awesome, master will surely praise us for it."

"I know. Mine's in development already. Oto-san will surely be happy with it."

Kuina said so as she looked as though she was scheming something. I had a bad feeling about it but she wouldn't do something that would put me in bad situation so I decided to let her be.

After a short while, I parted from Rorono's embrace. She looked as though she was reluctant to do so as well but in the end slowly parted away.

"Master, I am going to pause the research on mass production for now. Continuing might yield results that will improve the synchronization of the cores but it will take an awful lot of time regardless. So instead, it's more fruitful to focus on developing our weapons as well as optional parts for the Avalon-Ritters."

What she said made sense. It's kind of like how it's easier to improve your test

results from 50 to 80 than it is from 80 to 100.

It's better to choose the project that would give more fruitful results for the same or even less amount of time and effort.

"Okay, I'll leave it up to you, Rorono. I expect much from your work. It will play an important role in my plans. Also, for that and your successes, I shall give you a reward. Tell me whatever it is you wish and if it's something I can grant, you shall have it."

"Anything, Father?"

I didn't know whether or not it was because she was startled but she referred to me as Father.

"Yes, anything."

"Anything..."

She began to turn bright red; I was almost expecting fumes to come from her head.

Just what can she be thinking?

"You don't have to say it right now."

"Mhm, I'll give it more thought."

She nodded repeatedly and then sat down to drink some tea. In that moment, Aura interjected.

"Rorono-chan, it's your chance! Good luck to you; here's a little something from me."

Aura, for some reason, handed over to Rorono a bottle that contained a pink and highly viscous fluid. When Rorono saw it, even her ears turned bright red.

“I don’t need it!”

She said so and handed back the bottle to Aura. When Aura looked disappointed, I whispered to her.

“Aura, what’s that?”

“An aphrodisiac.”

Devoid of any hesitation, she replied so. To which, I was almost at a loss for words.

“.....how come you have such a thing?”

“I got it as the spoils of war from when we fought with the [Evil] Demon Lord. I analyzed it, extracted the toxins in materials such as mushrooms, herbs, and what not, readied all the other materials, and began the mass production of it. It’s being sold in Avalon too. It’s quite popular.”

“No, what I’m asking is why do you have something like that? Why even make it?”

“To earn some pocket money and to help the girls that lack the courage! Actually, the Dwarf S...mgmmgm.”

Mid-speech, Rorono interrupted and covered Aura’s mouth.

“Don’t talk about that.”

Rorono stopped Aura but I already knew what she was talking about.

So, that Dwarf Smith gave this to Wight.

It being effective on him was amazing since he should have been immune to poisons. But then again, maybe this mixture wasn't regarded as poison but rather as medicine. Otherwise, if it did register as a poison, his resistances would have instantly activated and purged it out of his body.

Also, if it worked on even him, it should work on almost all monsters and naturally, on Demon Lords as well. *What a frightening thing she has made.*

"Well, whatever, just make sure it won't cause any dependency on it. If such a thing happens here in Avalon, I will punish you for it, Aura."

"I've already made precautions so rest assured! The ones being sold are highly diluted ones so it would be extremely unlikely for those to cause addiction."

"Alright. But Aura, Rorono's still a child; she's not yet ready for such things."

Aura bowed and apologized while Rorono made a complicated face.

"For the moment, give me some of those. The undiluted, more powerful ones. It might come in handy in the upcoming fight."

"Will do! One dose of an almost undiluted variant is enough to render a human incapable."

"Yeah, that's what I want."

I had obtained a weapon in an unforeseen form. A chance to make use of it might not present itself but I'll keep it be sure.

"Now, let's talk about something for when we've finished breakfast. I will

obtain a new [Creation] medal today and with that, I intend make a new monster. If you're interested, you can come along and watch."

"Yay, a new little sister! ♪"

"Mhm, I'm going to drill the new monster as her older sister."

"I'll be happy to watch. I have been the youngest all this time so I think I want to experience being the older one."

Even though I knew it was a bit ineffective and futile, I still decided to protest.

"We still don't know for sure that it will be a girl. It may be a man for all we know."

At that, the girls exchanged glances and then huddled up. After a short while, Kuina, their representative, spoke.

"That won't happen! Monster made with Oto-san's [Creation] will assuredly be a cute little girl!"

"No, what about when I used [Rebirth] on Wight and turned him into a Black Dragon of Death!? He's a man, isn't he!?"

After that, while I felt somewhat crestfallen, we finished breakfast and then stealthily headed to the mining area.



In the mining area, as ever, the golems were busy digging up ores.

Thanks to the increased number of Dwarf Smiths that were faithfully making one golem a day, the number of golems here had increased substantially. Unlike Rorono though, they could only make up to a C rank golem which was more than enough for this task, to be honest.

“Now, everyone, let me explain the new monster I’m going to be making.”

The girls looked at me with eyes full of expectation.

“Avalon’s war potential, thanks to everyone’s contributions, have grown a lot. However, Avalon still lacks an intelligence and counter-intelligence monster. In other words, we are weak in that field. And so, I am going to make monsters that will remedy that.”

I knew that after I made the S rank intelligence-gathering monster, I would be made eligible to buy the B rank monster under it. So, to be able to buy them as soon as possible, I hadn’t used any DP since I bought the Darkness Dragons of the aerial combat corps.

“Kuina sure isn’t good at those kind of things.”

“I might know whether there’s an enemy but not what they are saying.”

Kuina and Aura who both were great at searching for enemies agreed to what I said.

After all, the most they could do would be to be prepared for any attempts at surprise attacks.

“The intelligence-gathering monster needs to be smart and be capable of understanding speech. So for that, I’ll use the same medal as I used on all of you: [Person]. The second medal will be [Water]. Water is something that can be found just about everywhere. What I want is a monster that can enter water and then hide itself in a different dimension.”

I had asked Kohaku in detail about monsters with dimension manipulating capabilities. In his story, there seemed to be a restriction for those monsters to enter a different dimension. The restriction was that only some things could be used and those things have to be connected with the idea of other worlds.

For example, one of Marcho's [Monsters of the Covenant] uses shadows and could only enter and leave another dimension through a shadow.

As for me, I would make the new monster use water given that it's a popular thought that what lies beyond the surface of the water is a whole other world.

Besides that, it's greatly helpful that the new monster could open an entrance to another dimension at any time and any place it wishes.

Moreover, it would seem that the other world these monsters cross to was one and the same; a monster that entered through a shadow would be in the same world as a monster that entered through water. So, the quickest way to stop a dimension manipulating monster would be to chase and challenge it in that other dimension.

For all those reasons then, to make my new monster—and its B rank subordinates that I'm going to buy immediately—have an edge even if only a little, I believed that [Water], one of the four great elements, would truly be the optimal choice for me.

"So, [Person] and [Water]. After those, I'll add in my [Creation] medal. The one I'll make it change to is going to be... [Song]. Songs are the symbol of the mystical. Moreover, with it, they can use sound to transmit the intelligence they have gathered."

If the monster's going to cross another dimension, [Water] alone wouldn't be enough.

Surprisingly, sound and water had good compatibility. After all, to transmit

sound, it has to go through some medium and I had decided that water would be the medium the new monster is going to use.

With control over both sound and water, even if the sender and receiver were separated, so long as there was water in between, the gathered information could be transmitted. My plan was to create an information network made up of the new monsters I was about to create. With the S rank monster to lead the B rank monsters, they would be dispatched everywhere to gather information that would be sent back reliably to Avalon.

“Now, let’s begin. [Discharge]”

By saying the word of power, I felt a hot sensation in my palm. In the next instant, my [Creation] medal appeared. I then took out from my pocket the [Water] medal.

And then...

“[I Shall Compose]”

I summoned my Demon Lord Book and bought a [Person] imitation medal.

With that, all three medals were gathered in my hand.

“[Synthesis]”

Particles of light then vigorously flowed out from the palm of my hand.

I then chose for [Creation] to change into [Song]. The light grew more intense and it soon took the shape of the monster.

Originally, everything from this point on was random. However, thanks to my

[Creation] medal, I could grasp the future I desired from the myriads of possibilities.

The possibilities for the new monster came and went.

After a while, I reached out my hand and took hold of the possibility that I wanted.

“Now, come, my new monster!”

The storm of light ceased and the new monster appeared.

It was a monster with a human’s appearance. She was a beautiful girl that had a boyish charm. A little older in appearance than Kuina, by my reckoning.

She had shoulder-length hair the color of sea. The same hue also prevailed in her strong-willed eye. Her ears were slightly pointy. A clear light blue dress covered her entire body.

That monster’s name was...

“I am a R’lyeh Diva, songstress of the deep blue sea and shrine maiden of an evil god.”

Such a clear, delightful voice. Just her voice alone was enough to intoxicate me.

“Nice to meet you. I am your creator. I am the [Creation] Demon Lord Procell.”

“So, you’re my patron, huh. Nice to meet you.”

She smiled and then gently extended out her hand.

I took it and with a tight grip, smiled back.

Chapter 14: Songstress of the Deep Sea's Abilities

I had finally made an intelligence monster with my [Creation] medal.

Made with [Water], [Person], and [Song], it was a monster that hid itself in another dimension by using water as its entry point.

It was a songstress of the deep sea, an R'lyeh Diva.

"R'lyeh Diva, the reason I made you is because none of my monsters are specialized in gathering information. And so, that will be your task as well as to guard our secrets from leaking to hostile entities."

"Yeah, sure, that's my specialty after all."

She was strangely frank. None of my monsters so far was like her so I was a little at a loss for how to interact with her.

"There's one thing that has been bothering but is it alright to ask?"

"Ask away. You are my patron; I will obey whatever my benefactor says."

"You are a monster called an R'lyeh Diva..... But does R'lyeh truly exist?"

It was about the word R'lyeh that was nonchalantly in her name. It was the name of an underwater city that sealed a malevolent god.

If it's as her race's name suggests, it would mean that she was indeed the songstress of that malevolent god.

"Yeah? R'lyeh does exist. If you're thinking of going there, I can take you

anytime.”

“Is it possible that the evil god is there too?”

“Yeah, it’s sealed there. I can release it though. Should I? Well, the positioning of the stars aren’t ideal right now so it might weaken the malevolent god quite a bit. I’d rather wait for a more ominous time.”

I gasped unintentionally. The malevolent god she was referring to, the one sealed with R’lyeh, was most probably Cthulhu. If that one is real and is released, it could easily destroy the world. Not just cities and countries, the world itself. It was such a being.

“Okay but will this malevolent god listen to whatever you say if released?”

“Ahaha, no way that’s happening. It’s better to say I’m the one that’s going to be ordered around, I guess.”

Ahaha, she laughed.

Really, this girl, I thought inwardly.

“Then, let’s not do that, let’s not release the malevolent god for the time being.”

I quite liked this world and would rather prefer for it to not get destroyed.

“Yeah, I understand. For the moment, again, nice to meet you, my patron.”

She said so and then smiled.

"I'll now be taking a look at your abilities."

"Yes, yes, please do take a look at all of me. ♪"

Using my authority as her Demon Lord, I confirmed her abilities.

If a monster was of a low rank, any Demon Lord could view even the most detailed information about the monster. However, if a monster was of a high rank, unless a Demon Lord had great power, they would only be able to see the monster's level. The exception of course being that if a monster was one's own, one could see everything regardless.

And so, I looked at R'lyeh Diva and saw her status in my mind.

Race: R'lyeh Diva

S rank

Level: 1

Physical Strength: C

Endurance: C

Agility: B

Magic: S

Luck: S

Special: S++

Skills:

Shrine Maiden of a malevolent god

Songstress of Destruction

Dimension Manipulation [Water]

Ruler of Water

Beautiful Maiden of the Ocean Floor

Shrine Maiden of a Malevolent God: Provides a passive boost (Large) to magic power and magic power recovery. Also provides bonuses (Small) to all other stats. By wishing for even more power, it is possible to receive the malevolent god's blessing^{curse}. Upon activation, all stats are doubled. However, activation also pollutes the mind and beyond a certain amount of pollution to the mind, the user is transformed into a different monster.

Songstress of destruction: Grants bonus appeal (maximum) to songs. Makes it possible for the user to put emotions and magic power into songs. Doing so makes it then possible to interfere with a B rank or lower target's thoughts. The probability of working on an A rank or higher target's mind would be determined by its magical resistances as well as its mental fortitude. If the resistances were overcome, its effect would be weakened by the values of those resistances. Additionally, with this skill, the user is also able to lift a special seal.

Dimension Manipulation [Water]: Allows the movement to another dimension through water. An S rank dimension manipulation skill.

Ruler of Water: Grant bonuses (maximum) to all magic that makes use of water.

Beautiful Maiden of the Ocean Floor: Through the skill holder's beautiful face and oozing charisma, captivate anyone that looks. Grants bonuses to intelligence (large). Also improves friendly aquatic monster's capabilities (medium) and the skill holder's commanding prowess (large).

"Yeah, you certainly have a dimension manipulation ability."

"Yeah, right? You, my patron, wished for someone like me so here I am."

I smiled because she had the abilities I wished for her to have. Not just the dimension manipulation ability but also her complete mastery of water magic and her ability to boost friendly aquatic monsters would make her ideal to take the lead of the intelligence unit I was going to form.

Her overall stats were low but that was alright since she had a special role to do anyway. And her stats being low was in terms of being compared to Kuina and the other S ranks; compared to other mage-type monsters, her stats were stellar.

The problem however was the ability connected to the malevolent god. It sounded dangerous just from its name alone. Especially the part that by continuing to receive the god's blessing^{curse}, she would change entirely.

Though I guess it would depend on how it's used. After all, she would only transform if that power was used too much. It would probably be okay if she used it sparingly.

Other than that, an ability with another ominous name was her Songstress of Destruction. However, its effect of possibly being able to interfere with a target's thoughts was convenient. Moreover, it was just the perfect ability for an intelligence officer.

".....yeah. I'm glad such an excellent child is born."

"Yeah, right? Count on me, okay? 'Cos I'm here to make you feel happy."

I didn't know if she was aware of my distress but she smiled at me nonetheless.

At that moment, Kuina came over.

"As we expected, it's a cute little sister!"

As she her fox tail swung, she gave R'lyeh Diva a hug.

"I'm Kuina. Kuina's also your older sister and next in command to Oto-san! So if there's anything you'd like to ask, feel free to ask Kuina."

Kuina immediately established her role as the older sister. She was basically a good kid so she most probably only wanted to be helpful and show her delight at the birth of the new monster.

"Hmm, so you're the patron's number one monster. You sure have amazing magic power and strength. Hmm, hmm, okay, I don't mind being under you. Onee-chan, nice to meet you. Let's support our patron together."

"Yeah ♪! Let's do our best for Oto-san!"

R'lyeh Diva casually said an alarming thing.

She must be the type to have high pride, I thought, oh well, as long as she properly recognizes Kuina's might, it's probably better to say she's just frank.

"You've made another amazing kid, master."

"Is something the matter, Aura?"

"Well, yes. Basically, I'm a monster that's on the side of protecting the world and that child, on the other hand, is a monster that's on the side that seeks to destroy it. So yeah, we're at odds."

Aura looked at R'lyeh Diva with such cautious eyes.

She was the keeper of a World Tree which governed over life so it really

couldn't be helped for her to feel such for someone related to a malevolent god who could bring the world to ruin.

"Well, more than whatever kind of being she is, I'd rather you view her as one of my important daughters instead. Whatever the weapon is, isn't how it's used the most important thing?"

"Understood but still, be careful, okay? Children like her often cause damage to her surroundings without knowing it. Instead of malice, it's more often the case that they do so out of fear."

Her warning made a lot of sense so I decided to take the proper precautions.

"R'lyeh Diva, sorry to do this so soon after your birth but here is your first command."

"Very well, my impatient patron."

It seemed she was hearing various things about us from Kuina but, upon my interruption, they ceased their conversation and looked over my way.

"We have prepared your welcoming party. First off, enjoy it as much as you can. Gathered there would be all of my top monsters. I'd like you to get to know one another for from hereon in, you too will be one of my top monsters."

"Fufuu. For me to be suddenly one of your top ranking monsters sure shows your appreciation for my talents and that makes me really happy. Very well, I'll comply without fail! I'll also play one of my prized songs."

"No brainwashing, okay?"

"Ahaha, there's no way I'll do that."

Like so, we returned to our residence.

At any rate, I had successfully gained an intelligence monster. After testing her abilities out a bit, I intended to buy several monsters that were two ranks below her. By doing so, I would have made Avalon stronger once more.

Chapter 15: To pay back for the tears shed on that day

Fire, Earth, Wind, and Water. The Four Great Elements.

These attributes were powerful and rare. And for Demon Lords, they were also a kind of status symbol for their monsters to have.

As for me, until recently, I had three: the Celestial Fox of Fire, the Elder Dwarf of Earth, and the Ancient Elf of Wind.

Now, however, I have made a monster with the power of Water, the last of the four.

That monster was R'lyeh Diva....

"Just what the heck are you planning by doing something like this?"

"Ahh. You're angry? Did you think I was just being mischievous? No, no, you see, I'm doing this for you, my patron."

I was at my wit's end.

In the morning, when I went out to patrol the city, Avalon became submerged in water due to heavy rain.

Avalon's weather was controlled dutifully by Aura and the High Elves so unexpected rainfall was almost out of the question, much less this heavy rain.

The culprit, of course, was R'lyeh Diva. She stood in front of my residence and sang.

"I mean, if there's water here, I can come to help at any time, right? If this

city's my patron's main base of operations, wouldn't it then be better to cover every point with water?"

"Nope, permission denied. To begin with, Avalon is a city made to be fascinating to humans so that they may want to live here and so that we may harvest DP from them. If we are beset with this much flood, it would inconvenience them and what do you think would happen to the city when they're inconvenienced here? That's why we've set up all the waterways all over the city anyway, to prevent being troubled by floods."

"Aww, after I've worked so hard. But I understand; I'll now let the water escape to the atmosphere."

She silently protested and then began to sing with her eyes closed.

The heavy pouring of the rain ceased and was replaced by the downpour of sunshine.

At that moment, Avalon's usual scenery returned. Among all monsters, R'lyeh Diva who had a special ability called Ruler of Water had the highest proficiency to use water magic and this much was easy for her.

"This will do, right?"

She asked so as she slightly puffed her cheeks.

"Yeah, thanks. I got mad this time but I know you just wanted to do something for me and that makes me happy. So, thank you. Still, if you thought of something next time, can you please consult it with me first? Who knows, I might even give you some useful advice."

At that, she looked slightly surprised before she replied.

"Woah, I didn't know the patron was the capable kind of leader, the type that doesn't forget to follow up on his subordinates."

This girl...

Crestfallen, my shoulders dropped.

Oh well, she might act like this on the surface but I know that she's a good kid inside. Since she listens to what I say, I can still teach her various things little by little.

"Are the Ocean Singers dispatched outside faring well?"

"Yeah, they are. They've begun gathering information."

I had already made and sent out 10 of the B rank monsters of the same lineage as her, the Ocean Singers. I wished for them to have ready firepower so I had made all of them to have static levels.

They were dimension manipulating monsters as well so they too were able to hide themselves in another dimension via a water entry point and thus were also able to gather information one-sidedly from anywhere that has water as they stayed in that other dimension. And since it was water they used as mediums to peep through, their coverage was exceptionally wide.

"Patron, it might be better to hurry. The prices of goods are beginning to increase. Iron, most of all, along with food have suddenly increased in value. Clear signs of war. Hmm."

R'lyeh Diva and the Ocean Singers communicated with each other by periodically sending and receiving encrypted sound packets via bodies of water. Depending on the place and situation, they might make use of rivers, underground streams, and many others. For them to have made such a

communication network in such a short time, it was certain that they were excellent monsters.

"Thanks for the good information. So, they really are planning for a war. You and your subordinates have done well."

"Those kids are rather limited in their dimension manipulation ability though so I often worry about them. Still, they're adorable kids."

"There's varying degrees to the dimension manipulation ability?"

"Well yeah. As for me, I'm mostly unhindered."

Their options varied greatly depending on the strength of their dimension manipulation ability.

First off, for both R'lyeh Diva and the Ocean Singers, the entry point for going to another dimension needed to be a pool of water with a radius of more than 30 centimeters.

As for where they could exit... R'lyeh Diva could use any body of water from all over the world, provided that it had at least 30 centimeters in radius. The Ocean singers, however, could only exit from bodies of water that were within 200 meters of their entry point.

This would limit them greatly in terms of launching surprise attacks but in terms of gathering information, they would be unaffected. Even though they could not come out of the other dimension from anywhere they wished, they could still one-sidedly spy on any place that has water.

Also, so long as the water was just for making a window to watch and listen from, they—both R'lyeh Diva and the Ocean Singers—could make use of any amount.

Now as for how pure the water could be, it seemed like, again, it would vary depending on the restrictions of the ability. For someone with an ability as high ranked as R'lyeh Diva, even a human's body fluids could be used. In other

words, this meant that it was possible to gain information from within the very source itself. However, if the target has powerful magic power, it would seem like the target would resist and the window couldn't be made.

Furthermore, if there was a defensive barrier in place, it would be hard to make the window to peek through. Again, however, the strength of a barrier that one could surpass would depend on the rank of their ability.

"It looks like they're going all-out for a city composed only of hundreds."

"Well, they're aware of the Mithril Golems stationed in this city, right? They really can't afford to get careless when each of those rival a B rank monster."

"I suppose. There were a lot of them shown to the public after all. But with just that, it's hard to imagine they would gather supplies to the point that the prices for those goods would be driven way up. Which means they've secured enough to seriously mobilize their troops and be ready for a prolonged battle. Maybe they, despite being humans, have sensed that we have something more hidden away."

I didn't say it out loud but I suspected that there was something beside the humans that we are facing in this conflict. I continued on instead.

"But then, that's rather half-assed. They're aware that we have more troops than we let on and yet they're still pushing. Supposing that they do have accurate information on Avalon's true war potential, mobilizing would only be more of a suicidal move. Either way, it's hard to imagine they're going through with this; even if they win, their side is the one that's going to suffer more losses."

Avalon always has scores of golems present within it and those are but a small number of them for every day, Rorono and the Dwarf Smiths each make a new

one. All in all, the golems that were in Avalon numbered over 300. From the ones working in the [Mine] to the ones made of orihalcum also called as the Avalon-Ritters.

Each of the 16 Avalon-Ritters were at least as strong as human heroes. Meanwhile, the other golems could be as strong as C rank monsters or in human terms, as strong as a veteran adventurer. In addition, the Avalon-Ritters were equipped with heavy-weapons developed by Rorono which further increases their overwhelming fighting strength.

With just the golems, we had enough war potential to surpass the war potential a standard large city would have as stated by Marcho. According to her, such a city would have a few adventurers of the very highest rank and about 10 heroes. After them, it should be expected for the city to have about 3000 soldiers it could deploy.

We outclassed them and yet they're still pushing and that was why I found it weird.

"Oh well, I'll try harder to find more about it."

"Take note of the places with barriers that B rank monsters can't pass through. For humans to set up such a barrier, those places got to have really important information that they're trying real hard to hide."

"We're already on it; my subordinates are already gathering intelligence from those places. It won't be long before we put together a report."

"Okay, I'll leave that to you."

Even if they had dimension manipulating abilities, on places that have certain barriers, they wouldn't be able to make windows to peep through. That said, a barrier that prevented even a B rank monster was quite grand. For them to go that far, I wanted to know whatever they might be hiding in there, by force if needed.

"I'll be going now, then. Please wait for our good news."

R'lyeh said so and then began to use her water magic to go through the water entrance she made underneath her feet. Before she could fully enter though, Kuina grabbed her by the scruff of her neck.

"You're not going to escape that easily. You're going to level up with Kuina today."

"Gyaa, I've been caught. But I don't want to, it's so boring, it's such a waste of time"

"No complaints. Unless you level up, you will be the weakest among us S rank monsters. Now, come with me quickly. If you don't listen to what Kuina says, Kuina'll get Oto-san to give you a command."

"Uuu, alright. See you later, then, patron. I'm going to train with Onee-chan for a while."

R'lyeh Diva left for real this time.

Although she replied like that, she and Kuina got along really well.

Now then, time to do some work, I thought, they should be here soon.

And so, I headed towards the entrance of the city. There, I visited a store and bought myself breakfast.

The meal I bought was a red soup with lamb meat and spices. It was a soup that could only be eaten here in Avalon, in this area at least. After all, procuring these spices from far across sea was generally very expensive. How it could be made cheap was due to the Hippogriffs. Thanks to them, the variety of goods here in Avalon have increased.

I took a bite of the lamb meat and it crumbled within my mouth. I then took a sip of the spicy soup and it woke me right up. *It's really spicy.*

It was fairly expensive when compared to the other dishes on the menu but still, it was a very popular meal among the adventurers.

At the moment, Avalon was really lively. The adventurers, the merchants, even the general guests, all were in a rush of happiness. They were overflowing with happiness now more than ever.

And that manifested in my DP income and the surge of power within me. I fed not on despair and fear but rather on everyone's happiness. This would prove that my plan was not wrong.

And then, right when I was enjoying the bliss of the morning, those guys appeared and ruined it all.

"Bring out the leader of this city, bring out Procell! That rascal! How dare him to embarrass me! I'm going to tear him apart!"

They were the soldiers that came from the neighboring city.

This time, they came with a wonderful looking carriage. My guess was that it probably carried a noble to oversee my signing of the official terms.

On their recent and final notice, the letter stated they would send out one last delegation but it failed to mention when it would arrive. I only knew through R'lyeh Diva and the Ocean Singers work.

"Welcome. Now, let's begin the negotiations, shall we?"

I presented myself very differently from last time and that disturbed the soldiers. I no longer humbled myself for I had earned enough time.

Everyone had worked so hard, especially Rorono, to buy us that extra time so that we could stand on better footing in the negotiations. Due to our weakness, I, her father, had lowered my head but never again. Never again shall I let there be a reason for Rorono to cry in my arms.

Rorono had fulfilled her promise by making the strongest golems, the Avalon-Ritters and I knew how hard she worked to do so.

I wouldn't dare waste those feelings.

I wasn't going to be subservient anymore. I was going to stand proud just like what my daughter wished for. My daughters had worked so hard and from this moment on, it was my turn.

Chapter 16: Forceful Negotiation

The soldier before me was enraged. I remembered who he was; he was the same soldier that led the delegation before.

In the beginning, Avalon had received demands from the neighboring city to be under its control. When they had dispatched their first group of delegates, I pretended to be subservient and asked that they return while I thought about it, effectively buying us some time. Afterwards, they kept on sending demands for a definite answer but I only gave vague replies, further buying us more time.

However, I could only stall for so long; the other day, I had received their final notice. According to it, they would send out one last delegation. If I were to not comply, we were under the threat of being on the receiving end of a show of force.

“You, what’s with that mouth of yours!?”

The soldier yelled so and placed a hand on his sword.

It would seem that by being obedient last time, he was under a misunderstanding. The misunderstanding being that he was the superior one between us.

The responsibility then falls to me to clear this misunderstanding of his.

"Right back at you. What are you, a mere soldier, trying to pull? Mind your tone!"

“Yoooooooooo!”

He then finally drew his sword. As it was, he was going to swing his sword my way and yet, I only smiled.

I would say that this soldier was about as strong as a veteran adventurer or in monster terms, a C rank one. I, on the other hand, had 3 S ranked Covenant Monsters and thus had overwhelming power within me. Even if I didn't do anything, I knew I would still be unharmed. However, for the sake of this show, I opted for a different response.

And so, something as fast as the wind got in between me and the soldier.

The soldier tried to stop his swing but it was already too late. The sword was drawn into the shadow and then made a loud sound as it made impact. The soldier dropped the sword and then held his wrist as pain coursed through it. The soldier who was the one that attacked was the only one that got hurt.

If it was perhaps a sword not made by Rorono, the sword would most likely have shattered. However, that was his misfortune. Had it broke, the impact would certainly have been less.

"W-what,"

The soldier looked up and saw the orichalcum-bodied giant that stood a little over two meters. Compared to other golems, it had a smaller and more curvilinear form. Yes, it was an Avalon-Ritter.

The golems were programmed to automatically defend the citizens of Avalon if ever they are exposed to violence. Additionally, at the moment, the golems weren't forbidden from attacking the soldiers. And thus, as response to the soldier's act of violence toward me, the golems' top priority target to protect, the Avalon-Ritter that appeared launched its fist toward the soldier.

However, its fist, like its body, was made of orichalcum. Moreover, an Avalon-Ritter had the power of an above-average A rank monster. If it were to punch a

human that was only as strong as a C rank monster, that human's corpse would scatter all over the place.

"Stop."

On the moment I judged fit, I gave that command. In accordance to it, the Avalon-Ritter's fist stopped at about 10 cm from the soldier's face.

The soldier looked scared beyond help before he was blown away. The fist stopped the exact moment I gave the command but the force from it alone was enough to send the man away as though he was but a leaf.

The other soldiers behind him then began to tremble. Even if it was done half in jest, they were still good enough as soldiers to be picked as part of this delegation. Thus, they should have had enough ability within them to have at least an inkling of just how much of a beast the Avalon-Ritters were.

Unfortunately for the soldiers though, their terror had to go on a little bit longer for in the next moment, Avalon-Ritters began to appear one after the other until a total—including the first one—of 10 had gathered.

One Avalon-Ritter was enough to easily murder them all but now, there were ten before them. In their fear, their teeth rattled and their bodies trembled.

"Avalon-Ritters, show them your power."

Upon my command, the Avalon-Ritters unleashed the magic power from their twin-drives at full-throttle and howled menacingly.

At that, some of the soldiers wetted and shat themselves.

This had to be done so that they would stop taking us lightly. I had to make them realize the precarious situation their lives were in so that we could finally have a proper negotiation.

"I want to negotiate but as we can all see, that man whom I dealt with last time is unavailable at the moment. Isn't there anybody who is going to replace him?"

I informed each member of the delegation so. I waited a while but there was no response. When I began to grow impatient, a man from the carriage at the back presented himself. He was a tall man that wore slim glasses.

"I will be the one in charge of the negotiations for today. Procell-sama, I am Telroma Roctinne. It is a pleasure to have met the leader of Avalon."

His voice trembled as he spoke. He looked feeble as well.

Nonetheless, he had the courage to try to continue the negotiations under such circumstances. Not to mention, he mentioned Avalon's name. Those, to me, made him quite the interesting fellow.

"So, Telroma-dono will be the one I'll be dealing with? Alright. It seems we'll be able to do some proper diplomacy."

".....I look forward to working with you."

We shook hands and then moved to my residence.

I won't hold anything back anymore; I'll make them know of our demands.



"Have some tea."

"Thank you. Much appreciated."

For our negotiations, we came to my residence's reception room. In there, a Mythological Fox served tea. Telroma was captivated by the Mythological Fox's beauty but then, in the very next moment, he was shocked by her fox ears and tail.

"I've heard the rumors but there truly are many demi-humans here in Avalon."

"Yes. It's a city built for demi-humans that are oppressed everywhere else after all."

".....So you have no intention of driving those girls out of the city, then?"

"None at all."

The previous delegation that arrived presented to us their side's terms and among them, some were impossible for me to accept. One of those terms were the prohibition of granting the demi-humans the same rights granted to humans. It pretty much obligated us to either to exile the demi-humans or let them be treated as the humans' slaves. There was no way I would let either of those happen to my cute little monsters.

"Procell-dono, if the demi-humans were perhaps to be treated better, to an extent, will you then agree to our terms?"

I was a little surprised.

I initially thought they were going to force me accept all of their terms. I did threaten them with the Avalon-Ritters and all but even so, this timidity was surprising.

"We of Avalon could never condone any discrimination toward the demi-humans in our city. This city stands because of them. In fact, this city's main attractions—the fruits called apples, the high-performance swords and armors, and the golems protecting this whole place—all are because of them and their skills. One other feature of our city—and it might have already become part of gossips—is that the training of the monsters used for air transportation is taken care of by them. This city will not be here now or at any point of time without these demi-humans."

Such was our official statement. It was already common knowledge that there were elves and dwarves here in Avalon but instead of saying they were monsters, we had declared that they were demi-humans.

"I see. Then, is there anything else we could discuss?"

"I'm a little surprised to have a more proper negotiation. Well then, here."

I handed to him the documents I prepared just in case. It detailed my response to the terms initially given to me. If all my counterproposals were approved, even becoming a city of the empire was fine by me.

"We have closely examined the terms given to us by the previous delegation and concluded that those are realistic halfway points. In other words, Avalon can only concede that far."

"I'll take a look then..... t-this is impossible! There's no way we can compromise this much!"

Telroma spoke so with a gruff voice. *Those points might be beyond his authority, I thought.*

"We can easily say the same. We have compromised a lot already with those points and anything more will be impossible."

Telroma the civil official trembled.

"Let's start with the taxes to be paid. This amount is still within acceptable values."

What I had written there was that we were to pay in gold coins the same kind of poll tax implemented by the neighboring city as well as 30% of the total harvested wheat. Originally, we were demanded to pay 50% of the total amount harvested and that was with the actual wheat.

Avalon's wheat was worth more than its market price. Moreover, paying with the gold which we could get as much as we want of from the [Mine] was more convenient. The materials mainly used for the golems were orichalcum, mithril, and silver. We didn't have much use for gold so we solely used it for money. Even at that moment, we had mountains of gold coins lying idle in storages.

"Then tell me, Telroma-san, which do you find unacceptable?"

"First of all, we cannot agree to you not complying to send out any personnel to provide us with your technology."

What he was referring to was the demand for us to send out experts to the neighboring city so that those experts could then share their knowledge on our advanced technology regarding the waterways, the preparation of the soil, and the production of the weapons and equipment. Moreover, it was a long-term kind of deal. *Don't screw with me*, was the only response that I could initially think of.

"If you want to gain Avalon's technology, you can just send out your experts here and have them learn from observing. I have no intention whatsoever of refusing that. If it's the weapons and equipment, they can buy one and examine that. They're not children, are they?"

"However—"

"If you want to steal our technology, fine but steal it by yourselves. We cannot and will not compromise more than that."

I strongly declared so. At that, Telroma was quite conflicted. It might have been the most important condition for them so that they themselves may have all of the things that made Avalon fascinating.

The natural response then was to not allow it to happen but since stealing it completely would be impossible for them, I allowed them to send out their experts.

".....to the next point then, Procell-sama. Won't you consider adopting the same set of laws being followed by my city and others all over the empire? After all, the empire has prospered for many years using these laws. Our tested and proven laws are much better than your unrefined laws."

"I refuse. Our city will operate with our own rules. That being said, as stated in those documents, we will permit you to establish your own consulate here and everything within that territory can be under the jurisdiction of your laws if you so choose. However, even one step outside of that territory will remain to be under the jurisdiction of Avalon's laws."

This was absolutely necessary.

If I allowed them this, troublesome fellows would come here from the neighboring city and do whatever they pleased. Extremely speaking, it was possible for those guys to rob and rape but be judged and punished only by that city's laws.

“Procell-sama, do you even intend compromise!?”

“But I already am and hence, that suggestion.”

How dare he accuse me of such when I have been compromising so much already!

“Then, lastly, will you also completely reject the implementation of tariffs and tolls to those going to this city and the handing over to us the 30% of the collected total?”

“Yes, we will. After all, Avalon is best known as a free city. Not being one anymore would mean the death of our city.”

We were being pressured to do this as well.

Our city's charm lied with its cheap taxes. If we allowed the other city to apply more and more pressure on us, Avalon would also have to adopt high taxes. If that happens though, we would also have to burden our citizens with the taxes and thus, our charm would be halved at the very least. Though that might just be what they had in mind.

“Unacceptable, Procell-sama! Do you even understand the state your city is in!? If our city was to put an embargo on your city, you would wither away even before the fighting begins. Avalon is dependent on our city after all.”

“Feel free to do so. Your city is no longer our only source of business.”

Undeniably, they were our source until a few days ago. However, now, that was nothing but a tale of past. Now, we had air transportation via the Hippogriffs. Thanks to them, we had rapidly gathered commodities from all over the world.

Applying pressure and prohibiting their ally cities from selling to us might work if not for the fact that the Hippogriffs could fly 600 kilometers in a day even with some load. Influencing their way through every settlement and city within that range simply wasn't possible.

On the other hand, merchants from the neighboring city were even choosing to pay for fines just so they could come to Avalon and buy the goods gathered here.

"Wh– Th-then, what if we prohibit the very travel to this city?"

"Feel free to do so as well. Rather, please do so. As things are, if you were to do that, the number of people that will leave your city and settle on ours will be quite significant, won't they?"

Currently, Avalon was overflowing with supplies and even entertainment.

Our tax was low and the cost of living here was already lower than in the other city.

We were constantly building houses and yet we could still not keep up with the increase of people. That inflow of people would increase all the more should they prohibit the travel to our city and for that, we would truly be grateful.

"I-it will come to war then. This little city will be erased in instant. Before even that happens, with war on the horizon, your residents will dessert your city."

"That is certainly worrying."

At Avalon's heart was its immigrants.

If they were made aware that staying here would put their lives in danger, they would probably return to their home city.

“Yes, right?”

“I think most of them will remain though. Even supposing a war does happen, we will come out as the victors after all.”

“How can you even believe that?”

“You’ve seen them, haven’t you? The golems, I mean.”

Telroma was at a loss for words.

He knew I wasn’t spouting nonsense.

“Avalon is not afraid of engaging in war..... that said, it’s pretty much inevitable to lose the lives of civilians , isn’t it?”

To my rather reserved words, the civil official smiled broadly.

“Yeah! So, compromise more—”

“Quit screwing around!”

I purposefully showed my anger and slammed the desk. The desk creaked and then broke.

“Hii!”

“I’m only going to compromise as much as I said I would. I don’t have to but I have conceded to those things and you’re asking for more!? No, I absolutely refuse!Follow me, I’ll show you something good.”

After my outburst, I suddenly laughed.

“Ye-yes”

The civil official stood up and nervously followed behind me.

Our destination was a [Plain].

Avalon was bound to get cramped for space so I purchased another dungeon room. In the future, I would also be making this a part of the city but for the moment, I intended it to be the battleground for the upcoming war. I could only earn DP by killing if my party was the one that killed an enemy or if the death happened within my dungeon. There was no way I was going to waste the tremendous DP the war was going to give and hence this dungeon room. If the fighting took place here, I could earn all those DP.

Anyway, in there, I had a little surprise prepared for Telroma.



We had arrived in the [Plain] that was in the backend of Avalon.

Upon seeing the spectacle I had prepared, the delegation, beginning with the civil official, froze in place.

“T-This is”

What they saw was the gathering of all our golems, even the ones not assigned to guard Avalon.

All in all they numbered 332 golems.

It was bizarre spectacle, indeed.

Upon my command, the golems all at once unleashed their magic power.

At that moment, the delegation was convinced. Convinced that should there be a war, they would be on the losing side.

“These are the golems made by this city’s dwarves. Each and every one of them holds at least the same power as a veteran adventurer. You are free to wage war on us but in the event that you do, even assuming that you win, expect your side to suffer enormous casualties.”

“This is impossible. Even if you’re a sage of the country, it should still take you months and years to build this many golems that are this powerful.”

It was a natural response. For the humans, it would probably take at least someone with the capabilities of an A rank to build even the C rank golems that the Dwarf Smiths could make.

“Do we have an understanding? If you want to go to war with Avalon, do so with the resolve to fight against them. Well then, this negotiation is hereby concluded. I shall guide you to your carriage.”

And so, I guided the frozen-in-place delegation toward the entrance of the city.

Showing them the golems served both to threaten as well as to misdirect them. As far as Avalon was concerned, the golems were but foot soldiers placed in the front lines. If the enemy was to focus on thinking up of counter-measures against them, it would be easy to surprise them with our other troops.

For this war—should they foolishly choose to proceed—our forces would be composed of the sniper corps led by Aura, the golems, the dragons, and the intelligence unit led by R’lyeh Diva. The other monsters would be kept in reserve. After all, we still had to appear like a city of demi-humans.

As the delegation that turned ghastly pale returned home, I wondered whether the other city would still choose to go to war with us even after all

these threats. I'm looking forward to see the humans' response.



Several days later, a letter arrived.

It was a proclamation of war from the neighboring city. The war was scheduled to begin three weeks later.

There was also a recommendation for our surrender. It seemed like that if we were to surrender, aside from being forgiven, we would also receive slightly better terms than what we were originally given.

Of course, I hastily threw away the paper that contained the recommendation for our surrender.

“Are they stupid?”

From the declaration of war to giving us three weeks, it was stupid.

Oh well, now that it's like this, it can't be helped; I'll now have to show them their place. And then, I guess I must do some adjustment within Avalon so that I can lessen the humans that will want to leave our city.

Chapter 17: The Citizens of Avalon

Ten days had passed since we received the proclamation of war. We were steadily readying for it but there were two other things that we needed to do alongside it.

The first was to explain the situation to the citizens and adventurers staying in Avalon. If we didn't do so properly, it would bite us later for if anyone was to suffer, it would be them. It was because these citizens trusted in me and Avalon that they chose to live here and even invite others to do so as well. To not take care of them meant the end of Avalon's growth.

I had already explained the situation to the heads of the merchant and adventurer guilds but they and their guilds were not the only ones I was beholden to; I, as the city's leader, was also obligated to explain it to the city's other citizens.

The second we needed to do was to determine the rules of this war.

"I didn't expect them to listen to my suggestions."

After we received the neighboring city's proclamation of war against us, I sent out a letter to them. The letter's content suggested that both sides refrain from indiscriminately harming the civilians. It also suggested that both sides' forces meet in a vast plain near Avalon at an agreed upon time to do clean and straight-forward battle.

This was greatly advantageous to both sides. If both sides did whatever we pleased, we might end up dealing great damage not only to our troops but to our citizens as well, perhaps to the point of annihilation.

"I'm really grateful for this; I don't want to slaughter so many."

The Avalon-Ritters I had shown might have been a great factor for them to agree to those suggestions, in that they were afraid we were going to let loose these golems within their city. If we did so, even if they managed to defeat the golems, the damage they would have sustained would be tremendous.

If they, for some reason, refused these suggestions, I planned to bombed them and finish it all at once. To the Darkness Dragons who could fly high in the air at the speed of sound, their city's high walls of a few dozen meters meant nothing. The dragons could easily fly over the walls and drop countless napalm bombs, turning the enemy's city into a sea of flames.

There were two reasons I didn't want to go down this route.

The first was that doing so was a waste of DP. I would rather have the enemy soldiers be killed within my dungeon so that I could earn their DP.

The second reason was so that I could lessen the number of Avalon citizen casualties ever so slightly. Golems would be posted within Avalon even during the fighting but reducing the casualties to zero was pretty much impossible.

For those two reasons, I proposed that we do battle on the [Plain] I just made. The enemy agreed but to make certain they didn't have any schemes as to why they easily agreed, I ordered the Ocean Singers to get to the bottom of things.

Through a certain method, the intelligence corps were now able to spy even the inside of the buildings that were protected by barriers. This world was very wary against magic but not so much against science so for someone like me who could use [Creation] to make things, taking advantage of such lack in security was easy.

So, through that method, we had determined something that the neighboring city was hiding. Through their connections, they had been able to gather thirty hero-class adventurers and that fact was most likely the source of their

confidence.

However, for them to think they could defeat Avalon with just those 30 A-rank-equivalent soldiers, they were really making light of us. Rather than seeing those 30 individuals as threats, we viewed them as incentives to fight. After we have killed them, Wight could easily turn them into undead units. With his ability, those 30 would be much stronger than when they were alive. When placed under his command, they would be reinforced even more. I imagined the chance to obtain 30 undead units that were as strong as A rank monsters wouldn't come very often.

Anyway, I planned on keeping the Ocean Singers posted on those buildings with high-quality barriers. *Hopefully, they'll be able to figure whatever else is happening behind the scenes...*

"That's one less thing to worry about. After that is to explain to the residents of Avalon the situation."

I had already spread that I had something important to announce later on the day at the city's largest open space. I intended to tell the ones gathered there the details of the war.



It was almost the scheduled time so I moved to the designated place and saw that quite a few people had already gathered. Like that, I climbed up to the stage.

Acting as my guards were Kuina who was at my side and Aura who turned herself transparent with her magic as she flew in sky. There was also R'lyeh Diva who hid herself in another dimension; her duty was to look out for other dimension-manipulating monsters.

"Ladies and gentlemen of Avalon, I am Procell, this city's leader. Today, there is something important I must tell you all."

Everybody's attention was all on me.

And then, in the next moment, a song could be heard from somewhere. Of course, it was R'lyeh Diva's song. Using the water around us as the medium, she had made dimensional windows that allowed only sound to escape from her side to ours.

Like so, as she watched out for any enemy monsters, she also continued to sing her soothing song. Of course, her song wasn't for brainwashing the humans; it was for bringing them into a state of light intoxication and euphoria.

"Some of you might have already heard of it but days ago, Avalon had been advised to come under the rule of the empire! At first, I found no issue with it but the terms given to us were far too unfavorable. It's the same as the neighboring city saying they will be turning this city and the ones that live here into their slaves!"

Due to their state of light intoxication, the citizens listened to me without a hitch; not one of them whispered a word.

"I was convinced of that after I saw the arrogant attitude of the delegation their city had dispatched. To think that even the very delegation that's supposed to build ties with our two cities would act like that! If Avalon ever falls under the command of that city, everybody in this city would become miserable!!"

Avalon's citizens nodded in agreement.

Me acting subservient to the delegation also served as preparation for this.

The delegation acting as they pleased obviously didn't sit well with Avalon's citizens and they directed that ill will toward the neighboring city.

“And so, I have decided. I have decided that I will fight for the happiness of everyone in this city!!”

I strongly declared so.

That said, that didn’t mean it was received with applauses.

“Does that mean that we’re going to fight as well? Against the neighboring city?”

A man asked so and was followed with agreeing comments from the others.

That was probably what they were concerned with the most: killing and being killed.

“Not at all. Aside from those that were first with me when this city was founded, I have no plans of letting anyone of you fight in this war. Furthermore, it has been agreed upon that the battlefield will be the vast plain outside the city. I would like for everyone to remain here where the city’s walls could protect them.”

As I said so, Avalon’s first citizens—the Mythological Foxes, Dwarf Smiths, and High Elves—stepped up to the stage as well.

We had explained to everyone else in this city that these girls were demi-humans instead of monsters.

As they saw the girls climb up, the city’s citizens made a bitter face. These children were all beautiful girls; had excellent skills that they used to continuously help out the citizens; and had built up bonds with the citizens from talking with each other a number of times. For those reasons, the citizens made those agonized faces at letting only those girls fight.

Another man then spoke up.

"I don't want to let only those girls fight. Can't we just surrender?"

"If we surrender, people like those soldiers from the other day would begin to come here every day and act as though they owned the place. Also, the taxes will increase five times more than what it is now. Many of you have probably moved here after experiencing a tough life from wherever you lived before but if we surrender, I guarantee you, it'll only get worse. ...worst of all, they advocate the discrimination against demi-humans. They're going to turn these children into slaves! As the leader of this city, that is something I absolutely can't let happen!"

I appealed to their emotions and it worked well thanks in part to the euphoria R'lyeh Diva induced. Thus, I pushed more.

"Nevertheless, I understand that some of you don't want to be involved at all in this war. For those that want to leave before the fighting begins, we will set-up a help desk so please direct your application there. We will provide the applicants with compensation money and a ride on one of our golem-pulled carriages. We will be transporting you up to the neighboring city. We expect many to apply for this service so do keep your luggage light."

Commotion rose from the crowd. They probably couldn't believe that the leader of the city himself was offering to help people escape from the city.

In my opinion, if they wanted to leave, they were free to do so. If I didn't prepare such an option for them, they would just complain later on that I forced them to stay in this city.

Plus, it affirmed my image that I prioritized the citizens of this city first and foremost.

After a while, a man raised his voice. I recognized him; he was the head of the adventurer guild.

"This city is an important location to us adventurers. The charge at the inn and the taxes, they're all so cheap. We can also sell here the materials we got from the dungeon for a good, good price. Losing this place will be a blow to us. So, we have decided that we are willing to cooperate with you in this war. We will use our connections as much as we can and gather war potential... can we expect Procell-san to take care of their remuneration?"

At that, I smiled. For someone to have said as much, it made me quite happy.

"Thank you. We won't ask you to fight for us but we do ask that you protect this city until the war's end. As I've said, we have agreed that the battlefield will be the vast plain outside the city but that doesn't necessarily mean that they will stand by it and not come here to pillage. If that happens, I want to count on you. We will pay everyone's asking price."

"Are you really sure? We don't mind fighting the enemy troops. We adventurers are stronger than the soldiers, you know."

The representative of the adventurer guild looked slightly angered. Perhaps he mistook my response for me not believing in their strength.

"Adventurers are professionals on fighting monsters but aren't as well-versed in killing people. However, those that would come to pillage aren't people, they're beasts. And beasts are fair game to you, right?"

The man from the adventurers' guild nodded.

The next to speak up was a male merchant. It was Relic of his Relic Company.

He was this city's most successful merchant.

"We, the merchant guild of this city, would like to offer our financial support in this war. There is no need to hesitate on taking it. This city is like a tree that bears money for us so losing it is out of the question. Moreover, this city's taxes are low. We would like to think of this financial aid as just the tax we haven't paid."

"Should a merchant really say it like that? Shouldn't this financial aid be offered as a loan that will gain interest over time?"

"Fufu, that is indeed the case if the other party has been trying to lessen our profits. You are not like that though. You have always found ways for both of us to come out satisfied in a deal. Thanks to you, instead of a loss, we are gaining even more. For that, we would like to support you with all that we could."

He said such a delightful thing.

"Thank you. Although it is only slight, there is still a chance that the war will be prolonged and that transportation through the air will become harder. Through the merchants here, I want to stock up on food and, when the war begins, provide it for free to the ones still within the city. Also, right when the war has ended, I wish to hold a celebration party. I shall take care of all those expenses."

"Are you sure!?"

"Yes. Though the taxes here are cheap, we have gathered more than enough from everyone's huge earnings."

Our scale of collection differed greatly from other cities. Even with low taxes, we had collected a lot.

That being said, the heads of the adventurer and merchant guilds didn't understand the source of our confidence. It would be natural for them to wonder that if we weren't going to make use of adventurers, conscript the citizens of the city, and take the financial aid to pay for our soldiers, how then were we going to gather enough war potential.

"Now, you might be wondering how we're going to fight without any of those offered help. To explain so, an introduction is in order. This will be Avalon's war potential."

One after another, the golems that the citizens had grown familiar with appeared. The ones that appeared numbered more than 300. The absurdity of it all left the citizens speechless.

"Everyone here is familiar with the golems but, in truth, the ones dispatched in the city are but a small fraction of their total number. Also, look above."

I pointed my finger to the sky. Circling there were the huge-winged Darkness Dragons. I let them stay there because if they got close to the humans, their special ability, [Fear], might cause the humans to panic. The humans already didn't know what to do as it was after seeing the huge black dragons that appeared only in fairy tales.

"I think you're familiar with Hippogriffs that do the air transportation for us but they aren't the only beings that Avalon has successfully tamed and trained; we have succeeded at these dragons as well. So, the golems, the dragons, and these children are going to fight for us. Even with just them, I am confident in winning. Avalon still has other fighting force aside from them but in order for it to not be revealed to the enemy city, it'll have to remain a secret for now"

I forcefully declared so. Seeing the over 300 golems and frightening dragons, the citizens were relieved.

...at the same time, some would surely be too scared to remain here knowing that such frightening creatures were here. *It can't be helped, not like I can hide them when the fighting begins*, I told myself.

"As you see, we can definitely win this war. Even if we lose, we have been promised that no civilians will be harmed. However, if we do lose and are forced to be under their command, life of all of us will definitely be harsher. To prevent that, I and these children will do our best and fight. I might be repeating myself here, but for those that want to leave this city, we have prepared compensation money and transportation. That's all I have to say."

With that, our forum was over and I descended the stage with Kuina and the others.

As I did, I wondered how many would remain. *It would be great if more than 70% of the population stayed*, I thought.



It took about three days to process the applications of those that wanted to leave the city.

The percentage that wanted to leave was less than 10% of the whole population. It was even better than what I expected and that put a smile on my face. It would seem Avalon was far more charming than I had thought.

"We have to absolutely win."

To protect all those that remained;

To protect the place that the ones that left would someday return to;

And most of all, to live up to the trust that everyone has given to me.

Now, it's time to show them what we've got.

Chapter 18: The Start of the War

Finally, the day of the war arrived. Unfortunately, up until this point, we still weren't able to ascertain who the being behind the actions of the neighboring city was.

We did, however, manage to find out about the other side's war potential and strategy.

The high-quality barriers on certain buildings had prevented our intelligence corps from knowing whatever was within those buildings but thanks to the many eavesdropping device I made using [Creation], such wasn't the case anymore. Even though they couldn't stealthily enter into the building themselves, they could easily get close to humans that would go into those buildings. By doing so, the Ocean Singers were able to place an eavesdropping device and camera as small as a pea onto those humans, thus enabling them to spy as much as they wanted. Even if the existence of those devices were found out, it wouldn't be an issue. After all, the other party wouldn't be able to figure whatever functions the unfamiliar devices had just by its appearance alone.

At this moment, almost all of the neighboring city's top secret information was flowing freely to Avalon.



I moved to the [Plain] I made together with my monsters and the golems.

According to our agreement, the fighting would commence here, the place I nominated, once the signal was given.

This Plain was bought with DP and was part of my dungeon and would thus earn DP for me. I had designed it to be as big as possible.

As we were arranging our formations, the neighboring city's army also began doing their preparations. And when both sides finished, the golem corps and enemy army were lined up to face one another. The enemy army had well over 3000 soldiers. The golems, even though they had increased in the three weeks that passed since the declaration of war, only numbered a little less than 400. In

terms of numbers, we were at a disadvantage but in terms of performance, I estimated that it was going to be an even match.

There was an agreed upon time limit for this war. That said, if one side surrendered regardless of the time, the war would end. Lastly, the victor would be determined by the number of casualties and prisoners of war.

It sounded like a game but this was the typical way wars were done in this age.

After all, both sides wouldn't want to suffer too much damage. In a war devoid of such rules and laws, both sides would end up harming each other's most vital resource: the citizens. Win or lose, both sides would end up scarred deeply. For those reasons, it became popular to decide upon a place to do battle and clash there. Doing it like so, aside from the lack of civilian casualties, the territories would also be able to function normally as soon as the war has ended. For sure, rules were important in wars.

"Patron, as expected, they seem to be greatly on guard against the golems. As for their strategy, it seems they're going ahead with holding back our forces with their heavily-equipped infantry while the magic users in the back focus on casting large-scale magic to wipe out our troops. Additionally, their elites are gathered as their mobile force. That seems to be the source of the enemies' confidence. Woah, those humans' smug faces are kinda disgusting, like they think they're the strongest in world, yeah, they make me so mad."

R'lyeh Diva's voice came from the cup I held in my hand.

The previous day, I ordered her to make it rain in this Plain, thus forming countless puddles of water. Like so, the gathering of information would continue as she hid herself in another dimension. Everything was laid bare to us.

"Thanks, Ruru. Do you know where the enemy commander is?"

I only knew for certain recently but in order for a name to be properly given and thus take effect, I would have to put in strong intent and magic power into saying it first. In other words, referring to my monsters with nicknames wasn't an issue. R'lyeh Diva was a little troublesome to say so I recently opted to calling her Ruru instead.

"Yeah, ahm, just a sec."

As soon as she said so, she appeared from behind me. I then took out a pair of binoculars I previously made with [Creation] and looked into it while R'lyeh Diva pointed to the enemy's commander.

After I confirmed so, I said out loud his characteristics. I was certain that *she* would pick up the sound carried by the wind.

"Then, as planned, continue gathering intelligence."

"O—okay. Good luck then, patron."

R'lyeh Diva said so and dived back into the puddle of water.

So far, things have been playing out almost according to what we predicted based on the information we gathered beforehand. The source of their confidence despite seeing the extraordinary Avalon-Ritters and the over 300 golems was the existence of the 30 heroes that were provided by whoever was hiding behind the neighboring city.

On top of being able to match and possibly defeat A rank monsters even in single combat, the heroes were humans and thus excelled at cooperating in battle. They could exhibit more prowess fighting together than when fighting

alone. Because of that, it was no wonder they thought they could win even against the Avalon-Ritters.

For one city to gather this much people was generally thought to be impossible. Probably so even for some countries. Therefore, the existence of the one pulling the strings truly was ominous.

However, they were being too naïve.

Did they think that the Avalon-Ritters were my trump card? Moreover, did they really think I would reveal my true card before the battle has even begun? They're looking down on me too much. And for that, they will pay.



Moments before the start of the war, a lone knight rode out in his gallant horse from the center of their formation. As much as I could ascertain from his appearance, he was quite the high-ranking knight.

He rode out not to lead the charge but rather to discuss terms one last time before the fighting begins.

That meant I must also set out to meet with him. That said, doing so on foot wasn't so appealing. As I thought so, Kohaku whose body was much bigger than any horse roared. He then approached and showed his back to me, as though saying I should hop on.

“Is it alright?”

“You are heading to war, my master, and I just can't allow you to do so on foot. Furthermore, as it's me, I can also act as your guard.”

“I'll be relying on you, then.”

Kohaku, now fully recovered, looked even more imposing. Coupled with the air of tension around him that was born from years of experience, he was the

exact image of a veteran soldier. His presence alone motivated his allies.

And so, I got on his back and headed to the center of the battlefield. When Kohaku got close, the knight's warhorse neighed and acted wildly. After some struggle, it threw the knight to the ground.

Except for the warhorse, silence enveloped the area. Despite all of its strict training and its experience in the battlefield, even that warhorse succumbed to Kohaku's imposing presence.

The horse ran off as fast and far away as it could. That left the knight dumbfounded as he knelt on the ground. I pitied the knight but proceeded as was normal.

And then, the knight—now on foot—and I—still on Kohaku—faced one another.

The knight had somehow regained his calm and acted appropriately during war time. He then read out the war's rules.

Those rules were just as we originally agreed on: limiting the battlefield to only this Plain, the procedure regarding prisoners of war, and so on.

We agreed once again on the rules and returned to each other's army. After a while, horns were blown loudly, signaling the start of the war.

Immediately following the signal, the enemy's heavy-infantry roared their battle cries and proceeded to rush forward.

Originally, they would only rush after firing arrows at their enemies but they judged that the arrows would have had little to no effect to the golems. *Not bad*, I thought.

However, that seemed to be the only counter-measure they had against the golems. They were still far too relaxed. For that, again, I intended to make them

pay.

The heads of the enemy commander as well as the head of the high-ranking knight exploded in the next moment. A few moments after their heads were blown apart, the delayed sounds of the attacks were heard.

“Master, task completed.”

The sky distorted and revealed Aura as she wielded her anti-materiel rifle that had smoke rising up from its barrel.

Her rifle was upgraded to be fully made of orichalcum. It was now dubbed as the ED-03AM Durandal·Avalon.

Looking closely, two people beside the knight died due only to the shockwaves produced by the bullet’s overwhelming power. Of course, the bullet also pierced and killed those behind the knight.

“Thanks for your work.”

“I haven’t tired myself enough yet though.”

Aura smiled and then spun around her anti-materiel rifle.

The distance between my forces and the enemy forces was just 2 kilometers.

Whereas Aura, supposing she stayed immobile, could hit up to 5 kilometers.

This entire Plain was her kill zone. Coupling that with R’lyeh Diva pointing out the enemy commander to her, such things as sniping them right at the start of the war were trivial.

Moreover, she could fly in the sky so gaining line of fire was easy as well.

“Well, if things end with this, we wouldn’t have to kill needlessly.”

The ideal would be for the war to end after taking out their leader. However, if their chain of command was set up properly so that they could recover instantly after losing their leaders, it would literally mean that we had to completely annihilate their whole army.

A voice then came out from the water.

"Alas, patron, they have splendidly recovered. There's still chaos on the vicinity but they are going to continue the war, good luck."

"No choice then. Aura, sorry to push you to work harder but cooperate with R'lyeh Diva and snipe the enemy from the back."

"Oui, oui, patron. Then, let's do our best Aura-nee."

"Yes, Ruru-chan, let's kill lots of them."

R'lyeh Diva once again slipped into another dimension while Aura became invisible again.

Anti-materiel rifles were originally meant to shoot through monstrously armored tanks but thanks to Rorono's remodeling skills which allowed her to freely incorporate orichalcum, the gun was now more than four times as powerful as it had originally been.

This latest model had been installed with a pair of twin-drive golem cores. Using those in conjunction with Rorono's Enchantments, [Hardening] magic could be used on the gun to reinforce it without taxing the user. Also, all the excess magic power would be used to activate [Acceleration] to further increase the destructiveness of the bullets.

It had so much power in fact that without the durability granted by its orichalcum body and Hardening magic, it would break apart as soon as a shot

was taken.

Naturally, the recoil was absurd as well. As Rorono would put it, it was an insane gun. Unless the user could negate the immense recoil like Aura with her use of wind magic, the user himself would be killed as soon as he pulled the trigger.

And then, there were Aura's skills. The [Shooter of Magical Projectiles] which improved the attack power and accuracy of her long-range attacks; her [Jade Eyes] which was the strongest magic eye; and her mastery over the wind which she used in this case to get rid of air resistance the bullet would experience once fired.

With all of these things together, one needed to be at least an A rank monster with defensive skills and magic in order to survive. Even heroes would find it hard to escape instant death against her.

Her current tactic was to bombard the enemy as the invisible, immobile marksman in the sky. The chances of her presence being discovered were exceedingly low but even if she was somehow discovered, she could just easily switch to a highly mobile tactic.

As it stood, she was the indomitable god of death of the battlefield. And acting as her eyes was R'lyeh Diva. By agreeing to fight in this Plain devoid of cover, they signed their own death warrant.

For some time, the sounds of gunfire reverberated in the air. Alongside it was the explosion of the heads of the enemy's trump cards: the heroes. Just like earlier, the unfortunate soldiers beside and behind those targets were killed as well.

It was one perfect headshot after another.

They were being slaughtered and yet, they had no idea where the attack was even coming from. Even the so-called heroes were screaming, panicking, and

dying without knowing how.

Needless to say, the enemy's morale was plummeting down.

"At this rate, it might not even take ten minutes for her to annihilate the enemies. But then again, we might not have ten minutes."

The sole weak point of her sniping was that it lacked the ability to wipe out all of the enemies in a short time. The heavily armored vanguard of the more than 3000 enemy army was drawing considerably close. No matter how hard she tried, she would be able to take out only a few hundreds by herself before the enemy army arrived.

According to R'lyeh Diva's report, the enemy predicted that I was going to order the golems to attack. They would then counter it by sending the heavily armored vanguard to stall the golems while their magic users in the rear prepared large-scale magic.

It was a good strategy if only we reacted as they expected. I didn't need to send out my golems at all because I had another way of disposing their vanguard and magic users.

"Wight, show us the might of the aerial combat corps you've trained."

"Yes, as you will my lord."

Wight whistled and 10 Darkness Dragons from Avalon's direction came flying to the battlefield.

The enemy soldiers that looked up to the sky and noticed them. Their reaction at the sight of the ominous dragons was the obvious one: they screamed and panicked.

Each of the Darkness Dragon carried a container. There were two kinds of

containers though. One that carried large amounts of napalm bombs and one that...

Now, let's teach them what it means to rule the skies.

R'lyeh is written as ルルイエ/Ruruie and hence Ruru. It can be argued that Lulu is better but, well, it's from R'lyeh after all.

Chapter 19: Trampling

Through the cup of water I held in my hand, I listened in on the voices and sounds that R'lyeh Diva had deemed worthy of attention. To be able to listen to the live voices of the enemy soldiers and commanders while remaining where I stood, I could only describe it as a very useful and advantageous ability.

It wasn't just R'lyeh Diva that hid in a separate dimension but also the Ocean Singers.

If there was any third party in this battle whose goal was to see my war potential, I was sure that they would act provided enough bait was set.

To be able to catch them when they do act, I formed a group of High Elves to work with the intelligence corps. Instead of them sniping out the enemies like the other elves, their mission was to stay concealed and search for any suspicious presence.

Now then, time to set a grand bait.

"Then, my lord, please look over there as we display the might of the aerial combat corps."

In response to Wight's finger-whistle, the Darkness Dragons came flying high in the sky.

They carried along with them the containers made by the Dwarf Smiths.

The sight of the 10 Darkness Dragons in perfect formation was indeed a spectacle. They flew at the height of 400 meters above the ground, well beyond the reach of bows and magic.

The enemy soldiers looked up and, upon seeing the dragons' majesty, cowered and trembled. The soldiers didn't know what else to do other than to keep looking up. Their strategy against the golems was for the heavy-infantry to hold the golems off while the magic users at the back casted strong magic to wipe the golems out. It was a simple yet good enough plan. However, against the dragons flying in the sky, it was worthless.

"Well, we did misdirect them into thinking like that."

We had purposely shown them the golems to trick them into believing that the golems were our main force, after all.

"Now, show them hell."

Originally, just as the enemies couldn't reach the Darkness Dragons while they were in the sky, the dragons also lacked the means to attack the enemies in the ground without dropping their altitude.

Their breath attacks could reach, at most, only a distance of 100 meters.

That was true though only until had I provided them their means.

When the enemy vanguard resumed rushing in, nine out of the ten containers were opened to drop down the vast amounts of napalm bombs contained within. Considering the Darkness Dragons' strength, they could carry more than two tons at a time but since we didn't have that much supply of napalm bombs anyway, it was decided that each were to only carry almost two tons of the stuff.

The dragons' targets were the heavy-infantry rushing forward.

And the result was...

“GYAAAAAAA!!!”

“HELP!!!!”

“SO HOT SO HOT SO HOT SO HOT SO HOOOOOOOOOOOOOT!!!”

Each member of the vanguard burned in hellfire.

Nearly all of them were killed. The stronger ones managed to live momentarily longer which was the worse fate in this scenario for the longer they lived, the longer they felt the fire and thus writhed in agony.

The power of this bombing was incomparable to the previous one conducted by the Hippogriffs.

After all, in this world, part of the user's stats affected the power of the weapon. Darkness Dragons were B rank monsters with an A for their Physical Strength stat. They also had the skill [Miasma] which increased their offensive capabilities even more.

That wasn't all. They also benefitted from Wight's special ability, the [Ruler of Death] which he gained upon becoming a Siegwurm. This ability allowed him to drastically strengthen the undead units under his command.

Given all these, there was no way humans of just these strength could survive. And so, with none of them being able to do anything, several hundreds of lives perished.

“Amazing. Power, power is welling up within me! Ahahahahaha!”

I unconsciously laughed out loud.

This entire Plain was part of my dungeon and thus, all the lives lost here became my sustenance; the souls of the entire enemy army, no matter who they were, were soon to become my power.

If I were to compare it, in Avalon, a gentle power flowed calmly into me. In this moment, however, the power that into me brought me a different kind of pleasant feeling. The soldiers' fear, despair, and their very lives flowed into me as violently and as incessantly as a river during a raging storm.

With each passing second, the taste of their fear developed; the taste of their despair became even more pronounced; and their lives even more vivid as it disappeared.

Oh... I just might go mad from this, this, this sensation, oooohh. More, I want more of it, quickly.

“Kill, more, kill more of them!”

More, I want more! Yes, that's it, let's burn their city down. That way, those whose homes we burned will retaliate and deliver more, a lot more, of these... food. No, that's still not enough; one city's not enough. I'll burn many, many, more cities! And more and more food will come! And then, I'll burn them all! More, I want to feel more of this sensation!

“More! This not enough, not at all!”

Once they're all gone, we'll move on to the next! We'll fight another country! More! Kill more, feel good more, kill, feel good, I, I...

“Oto-san”

I then sensed something small and soft touch my hand. Thanks to that touch, my heart didn't fall “somewhere”.

"Ku... i... na..."

"Oto-san, you're making such a scary face."

Kuina was looking up at me with a frightened expression on her face.

Seeing that, my head quickly cooled. I wondered just what kind of face I was making or just what the heck I was saying, for that matter, since that wasn't like me at all.

"My bad, I got a little drunk."

"Thank goodness, it's the usual Oto-san!"

Kuina then hugged me tightly.

My, my, what a shameful father I have been.

With that thought, I took big, deep breaths and gradually returned to my usual self.

This wasn't my first genocide; I had done so before when I fought with [Evil] and yet, nothing like this had happened at that time. I was in a party with the Hippogriffs back then so I did feed on the enemy's souls but then precisely because I was in a party, the effects had weakened. Moreover, it was just their souls that I fed on instead of their emotions as well.

Even after considering all that, it seemed to me that the most prominent factor was that feeding on humans just more delicious than doing so on monsters.

It wouldn't have been weird if a Demon Lord who knew of such a fine taste became a warmonger. Thankfully, I didn't end up becoming one. *Stay strong, my heart.*

“Oto-san, on your back”

Kuina said so as she pointed to my back where I had, since earlier, felt a strange, hot sensation.

“It looks like something has grown.”

What was there was a pair of jet-black wings and soon to follow it, I felt, were horns. By dining on thousands of humans, it felt as though my status as a Demon Lord had risen.

Nevertheless, I was posing as a human so this form was inconvenient, to say the least. As soon as I thought so, the wings vanished. It seemed like I could make it appear and disappear at will.

“So cool! Can Kuina touch?”

“Later. The war’s still not over.”

“That’s a promise!”

“Yeah but later, ok?”

And so, I turned my attention back to the battlefield.

Nine out of the ten containers the Darkness Dragons carried contained napalm bombs which they already dropped down on the enemies.

As for the activities of the last one, it had leisurely flew pass the vanguard to drop not just the contents of its container like what the other dragons had done but the container itself.

It made a deafening sound as it crashed right in the middle of the enemy rearguard formation. A few unfortunate soldiers were squashed by the

container. Of course, squashing wasn't the end goal here...

"What, are those people in that box?"

"Those aren't people; they're golems!"

"Gyaaaaaa! These guys are strong and fast!"

"Magic doesn't work!? Help, somebody heeeeeelp!"

What were loaded into that container were ten Avalon-Ritters.

There were only a few of them since the rest were enhanced via special remodeling and were thus hidden to be one of my trump cards.

Anyway, as mentioned earlier, the enemy's strategy was for their vanguard to hold off the golems while their magic users at the back casted large-scale magic. So for that reason, the enemies near where the Avalon-Ritters were dropped off were mostly magic users. Of course, there were some knights around to serve as guards but they were relatively few in number.

The question then was what would happen now that the Avalon-Ritters were there. There was but one answer: a massacre.

To start things off, the Avalon-Ritters activated their twin-drive golem cores to be at full-throttle. Strong magic power condensed into particles of light began to rise up. Just with those vast amounts of magic power, the enemies were plunged into a state of panic.

Each Avalon-Ritter was equipped with a gigantic greatsword that no human could wield. Each sword was made by Rorono to be the Avalon-Ritters' basic equipment.

It was made with orichalcum alloy so despite the swords' size, each was relatively light-weight and durable. Needless to say, the swords were superbly

sharp. Each also had two enchantments applied to it. One of it was the improvement to slashing attacks. This improvement alone by Rorono was enough to classify it as a first-class magic sword. To add to that, by injecting magic power into the sword, it could propel the user to whichever direction he so desired.

All of the excess magic power produced by the twin-drives were transformed into kinetic energy thus giving birth—from the enemies' perspective—to catastrophe.

And so, the greatswords made of orichalcum were wielded at a speed faster than sound.

Due to the Avalon-Ritters' excellent non-human brain, it could perform complex movements while maintaining great balance even at that speed. And then, due to it being a golem, it could not get tired at all. What those meant was that the Avalon-Ritters would not stop until there were no more enemies before them.

It was as though they were whirlwinds.

The Avalon-Ritters cut and chopped up the enemies as though they were only pieces of paper, completely unable to offer any decent resistance to their killers.

To use magic, it must first be channeled but the Avalon-Ritters didn't have any intention of giving the enemy magic users that time.

The most the magic users could do was hide behind a wall made out of their fallen allies' corpses and cast close-range magic despite the high likelihood of friendly fire. However, Avalon-Ritters were made of orichalcum and were thus highly resistant to magic. The only harm the enemy magic users were doing was to their allies.

The few knights as well were chopped up whenever they came near the Avalon-Ritters.

It was impossible for them to stop the Avalon-Ritters with so few. To do so, they would have needed dozens, no, hundreds.

“They’re amazing, Rorono.”

“Developing the artificial brain so that it could masterfully wield that sword was more troublesome than making the sword itself. But, I’m satisfied with these results. They would serve as good data for improving the Avalon-Ritters further.”

Rorono the developer was in great joy.

And she should be for her work was truly amazing.

“As for the improved variants, it seems like we can keep them on reserve just as planned.”

“Mhm. We can win even if those ones aren’t used. After all, those are genuinely worthy of being called trump cards.”

It had been only a little over ten minutes since the war had begun and yet the victors and losers of this fight had already been determined.

The enemy army had already lost 80% of their total and any structure of command was gone.

As for our side’s damage, it was limited to only those that were in our vanguard. The loss of a few Silver Golems was nothing major.

“Aura, have you been properly holding back?”

“Totally, master.”

I did not see her form but her voice was carried over by the wind.

The enemy army's last ray of hope, their elite forces, were systematically being killed by Aura and R'lyeh Diva.

After we had secured a fair amount of advantage, I had instructed Aura to do as little damage as was possible to the would-be corpses. In response, instead of direct hits, she only grazed her targets enough to kill them. This was needed because Wight's [Enhanced Resurrection] might not work if the corpses were too damaged.

"Anytime now."

My guess was that even if the enemy wanted to surrender, they were either already dying or just couldn't declare so given the present situation. After all, their frontlines were being burned by the sea of ominous black flames—due to the dragons' [Miasma]—while their rear was being slaughtered by the hurricanes that were the Avalon-Ritters.

I then decided to just wait and watch until the napalm-born flames ran out of things to burn and thus vanished.

But then again, if I wait that long, the Avalon-Ritters might have killed everyone already.

As I decided to wait regardless, the water in the cup I held trembled and I heard R'lyeh Diva's voice.

It was a warning.

I signaled so to Kuina and she nodded.

A minute later, a man very silently appeared behind me.

The one that erased his presence and came to take my head was a hero-class

adventurer that slipped past Aura's search-and-destroy unit.

The only hope their side had to win was if they could somehow kill me, our side's top commander. But even if this individual managed to do so, he must have known there was no way he could escape. It was an attack made knowing full well he would never return. I could see the valor in it but, *such a shame...*

"So, you believe you've completely erased your presence?"

Kuina turned towards him and pulled the trigger of the shotgun Rorono had customized.

It might have been due to the anger she felt toward him who aimed for me but regardless, she used her shotgun's full-auto mode when even one shot would have been enough to deal a fatal blow.

The man, after receiving four shots in less than a second, couldn't be recognized anymore from his previous form.

"Kuina will protect Oto-san."

The man died without being able to do anything.

In the first place, with Kuina, Aura, and R'lyeh Diva, there was no way to launch a surprise attack against me.

After a while, the flames caused by the napalm bombs had subsided enough.

The Darkness Dragons then landed. Just by being close to the dragons, the few remaining survivors were driven into madness by the dragons' special ability [Fear] and then died.

By this point, I could finally see beyond the wall of flames. As soon as their vision cleared and saw us as well, some from the enemy army desperately waved white flags. *There isn't even ten percent of them left.*

At that, I hurriedly told Rorono to make the Avalon-Ritters stop.

"R'lyeh Diva"

"There are less than two hundred that have survived. Woah. There were more than 3000 of them before though— how pitiful—"

"It's a war so it can't be helped. Then, Wight, go ride with Kohaku and ascertain whether they truly wish to surrender."

"Yes, my lord. Kohaku-dono, let's go."

"Hmm, finally, something for me to do."

And so, the two headed to the survivors that continued to wave their flags.

The enemy should know by now just how horrible an experience it was to go against Avalon. I suspected they would be obedient for a while.

Regardless, the war was over.

I drank the water in the cup since I no longer needed to receive intelligence from R'lyeh Diva for the time being.

After Wight had ascertained the will to surrender, he began the post-war negotiations. After that's over, it was time for the celebration party. *Let's all go all-out today*, I thought in regards to the celebration.

It was a good thing the war had concluded without the need to show the trump cards I had decided to hide like Kuina's new weapon, Rorono's improved [Mechanical Warmaiden], the enhanced Avalon-Ritters, the Darkness Dragons'

new equipment, R'lyeh Diva and the intelligence corps' combat capabilities, and more. That being said, regardless of how many remained hidden, the fact that I had exposed quite a lot of my war potential remained true.

I was certain that the one pulling the enemy's strings must have made an action. *I have to talk in detail with R'lyeh Diva and the High Elves that stood guard later.*

Anyway, before I left the place, I ordered that the corpses that were still in good condition and could be reused as undead monsters to be gathered and to be preserved by freezing. By my reckoning, we had obtained at least ten hero-class adventurers' corpses and at least several hundreds of the other soldiers'. They would definitely be great additions to our undead forces.

At any rate...

"Everyone, thanks for all your hard work. You all did great."

I decided to reward my monsters since it was due to them and their persistence that we won this time.

Epilogue: Celebration Party

"Procell-sama, are you really sure this is good enough for you?"

"Avalon doesn't want for there to be further bad blood between us. So yes, we do not have any plans to seek for recompense."

In the reception room of my residence, we dealt with the post-war processing.

On the other side of this conversation was the one that raised and waved the white flag in the battlefield while being scared of the Avalon-Ritters' murderous storm.

He was the neighboring city's lord.

The reason he had for being in the battlefield sounded something like he wanted to personally see Avalon being trampled upon.

I only heard this indirectly but he seemed to have thought that their victory was definitely for certain. For him, their side going toe to toe with us was impossible enough, never mind their side losing.

It seemed he used his soldiers as a shield to survive but nevertheless, he survived through the war. He had terrific survival ability.

"Thank you very much. I-I promise you, from now on, we will not be a problem for Avalon anymore. I swear so please, I beg you, spare our city."

With much force, the other city's lord bowed his head enough that it touched the table. What he feared most at the moment was that Avalon would chose to retaliate and invade their city.

“Avalon has no intention of doing so.”

The only reason we fought in this war was because it was forced on us. Even so, if we took it a step further and conquered the neighboring city instead of settling things here, the empire itself would be against us. We might win but I'd rather not deal with that trouble especially since we didn't wish for any to begin with.

“However, if ever we find out that you've been conspiring with other cities against us, we will mercilessly raze your city to the ground. What you've seen was but a demonstration of our true might. Bear that in mind. Even if you have assembled an army capable of defeating us, remember that we can turn your city into ashes before the fighting even begins.”

If we didn't care for the method and only at the result, things would be over instantly.

In the case that they gathered a force we couldn't hope to win against, my move would be to first bombard their city from the sky. After that, we would completely hole up and defend the city. Like so, the enemy would soon wither away.

“I-I understand. We will not, never again, to this city, stand in opposition, even if we gain support from our country.....”

At that, I smiled.

“Then, let us confirm the terms for the armistice, shall we? First, about the pass that Avalon will issue. Anyone that has this pass will be exempt from tariffs

and admission taxes. Also, all undeserved taxes to those going toward Avalon's direction will no longer be imposed."

"Understood. Those can be arranged right away."

"Next, to watch over you and your city, you shall take on a subordinate of mine as your secretary."

"I consent on that too."

"Then, come."

A blue-haired beautiful girl in a dress then appeared.

She was one of the Ocean Singers of the intelligence corps.

"Grant her access to everything and let her do whatever she wants. If we ever lose contact with her, we will take it as a sign of your hostility toward us and thus act accordingly."

"I-I understand. She shall be treated as we would a guest of honor."

With her there to observe in an official capacity, any disturbing activity the other party was up to would be reported immediately.

".....but are you really sure you're fine with only these two conditions?"

He still doubted me and I really couldn't blame him. To him, I might have sounded too optimistic.

"Yes. As I've said in the beginning, what we wish for is the mutual prosperity of both our cities. If a city we traded with underwent a recession, the business coming from there will also lessen. So, we have no intention of burdening you further than what is necessary."

A fair number of our valuable guests resided in the neighboring city so it would actually impact us negatively if that city's economy failed to prosper.

Humans were a very important resource for us. We mustn't, if possible, carelessly decrease their numbers. Rather, it would be better for us to set up an environment where their population would increase.

"Be that as it may, Avalon will only be lenient this one time. The opportunities to take advantage of this leniency are there and are plentiful. Perhaps you might even decide to attack us again. Should you do so, however, don't expect us to hold back again."

In response to my threat, the other city's lord went ghastly pale and shivered.

With both sides in agreement, we signed the documents relevant to this armistice and concluded the meeting.

"Oh, that's right, we're going to hold a celebration party but would you like to join us?"

"Tha-Thank you for your consideration b-but as I have, ahm, things to attend to, I would have to respectfully d-decline."

"That's a shame. But all of your horses have ran away during the war, right? Let me arrange for you a golem-drawn carriage. I wish you a safe journey home."

I said so with a smiling face. The other city's lord on the other hand repeatedly nodded.

He had already forgotten but just a while back, I had made him drink a truth serum concocted by Aura. Through that, I had made him spill all that he knew. I

had also placed within his body a listening device and transmitter.

I had done all that without him remembering a thing. It was such a drug.

After he left, I contemplated on what he had relayed to me.

"This is a surprise. Someone from the Rigdolg Faith had instigated them into this war. And a high-ranking priest at that."

The Rigdolg Faith was a religion with vast influence over many countries. Considering it was the Rigdolg Faith, it was entirely plausible that they could easily gather those hero-class adventurers from various countries.

One thing that the lord confessed to me got my attention though.

"These Hero-class adventurers are *cultured* so don't worry."

Said the priest of the Rigdolg Faith to the neighboring city's lord.

What I heard made things have more sense. Originally, to be a hero-class adventurer, one needed to have earned a vast amount of experience. Gaining raw combat strength alone wasn't enough, the real threat lied with the heroes' instincts born from their accumulated experience. Clearly though, our opponents this time didn't possess such instincts.

A theory came to mind: If a Demon Lord was indeed behind the Rigdolg Faith, wouldn't they then be able to mass-produce hero-class adventurers within a short time by letting those would-be heroes efficiently kill the said Demon Lord's monsters? And if so, it made sense that these heroes' instincts were not as developed.

Nonetheless, these were all in the realm of conjecture at the moment. Our first step was to let the lord go roam free and then gather intelligence from his

activities.

I had instructed the Ocean Singer I had appointed as his secretary to deliberately give him space. I suspected that when that chance presented itself to him, he would make direct contact with whomever can lead us to the real enemy.

In other news, the High Elves and Ocean Singers I had made to survey the battlefield had apprehended some suspicious monsters. They were currently being confined in the dungeon proper underground and would be properly pried for intelligence at a later date. *For now...*



After seeing off the golem-drawn carriage that the neighboring city's lord rode in, I returned to Avalon.

Upon doing so, a man cheerily greeted me.

"Procell-san, I heard it was your complete victory."

He was the merchant Relic. His face was already red when we met, a clear indication that the celebration party—and the drinking for that matter—had already begun.

Given that Avalon was a city surrounded by high walls and that entry and exit were prohibited during the war, the citizens within the city had no knowledge of how the war unfolded. All they knew was that we won.

"Yes, it's thanks to everyone's support."

"What are you talking about? In the end, you almost didn't let us help you, remember? And yet, you trashed your opponent of 3000 strong in less than an hour! This city is the best. Hahaha! Avalon is the most profitable and safest city in the world!"

He praised Avalon without reserve but his eyes were serious. I was sure he smelt the scent of gold. *Geez, he's a person I really can't drop my guard to.*

I stayed a while for some idle chat and then parted with him to walk around the city.

With the threat of the war gone, everyone was in a state of great revelry.

Because of the celebration party, a considerable number of merchants could be seen here and there, offering luxurious food and alcohol. Everyone was smiling.

It was as though a genocide didn't happen just a little while earlier.

"Ah! Oto-san, these kebabs are delicious!"

"Master, this soup is tastier."

"This dried fish too is superb."

Kuina, Rorono, and Aura each brought along a cuisine in their hands.

I had made them go ahead of me and enjoy the festivity. And it seemed like they did enjoy it.

"Oto-san, say *a-h*"

"Kuina's so sneaky."

"Now, now, Rorono-chan, we can just simply do it too, right?"

The girls each fed me the food that they brought.

Aside from each coming from a different faraway city or village, each cuisine

was also delicious.

Avalon, as it was currently, was a melting pot of very diverse cultures. Although it was but one city, it enjoyed the culture of various nations.

The ability to enjoy such things was one of Avalon's greatest strong points.

"By the way, where's R'lyeh Diva?"

"It seemed like she had something else she wanted to do so she separated from us."

"Ohh, that's a little worrisome."

As soon as I said so, I heard a tremendous cheer coming from somewhere north. When I came to see the commotion, I discovered that it was because R'lyeh Diva was singing.

The citizens were in a trance as they waved their hands and stamped their feet. They were in an amazing rave.

"Master, it's a good song, isn't it?"

"Yeah, Aura, to the point that it's kinda scary."

R'lyeh Diva didn't make use of any special ability. It was purely her charming song that put the people in such a frenzied state. It seemed to me that that song could be turned into a good weapon which would unite the hearts of Avalon's citizens into one.

"There's some unfamiliar food over there; let's go eat them."

"Yay♪"

"Mhm"

"Yes!"

Together with the three, I enjoyed the festivity to the fullest.

As we headed toward the next place to eat, we passed by Wight who was arm in arm with a Dwarf Smith. Next to them was Kohaku with an extra-large piece of meat attached to a bone in his mouth.

.....the citizens of Avalon are amazing. A Byakko walks among them and yet they're not minding it. The human beings' ability to adapt is amazing.

“Oto-san, you’re so slow.”

“Ah, sorry.”

I then quickened my pace.

What I felt at the moment was the desire to forget all my worries and immerse myself instead in this festive mood.



The party continued on until late into the night.

Sometime in between, the citizens had found me and made me do a speech.

I got caught up in the mood and said some fairly embarrassing things like *Avalon is invincible* or that it will prosper even more.

Perhaps due to my strong conviction during the speech, the girls became strangely motivated.

“We should be getting home now, don’t you think?”

I asked so and they nodded in return.

The citizens seemed to have intended to continue all night but, as expected,

we couldn't party with them that long.

"Oto-san, Avalon's a great city!"

"Yes, it indeed is."

If I listened carefully, the citizens' cheers were still audible.

Even during that moment, their gentle emotions continuously flowed into me and became my power.

It was happiness. By making the people happy, I became happy.

I want to make Avalon an even more fantastic city, I thought.

"Kuina, Rorono, Aura, this is just the start for Avalon. I ask you to help me make it the happiest city in the world."

"Yay♪"

"Mhm. If that is master's wish."

"Yes, I will also do my best. Not only with the newest fruits but also with various medicinal herbs."

They're all so reliable.

These pleasant replies would be my lullaby tonight.

"It's been a while so why don't we all sleep in a single bed tonight?"

In response to my question, each of them replied with a smile in their face.

Great. Tonight's turning out to be a great night. I really wanted to share this happiness I felt with these girls.

STATUS**Race** R'lyeh Diva**Rank** S**Name** (Not named)**Level** 1

Physical Strength	C
Endurance	C
Agility	B
Magic	S
Luck	S
Special	S++

Skills

Shrine Maiden of a malevolent god / Songstress of Destruction / Dimension Manipulation [Water] / Ruler of Water / Beautiful Maiden of the Ocean



THE DEVIL IS MAKING CITY 4

Credits

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